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Wednesday June 11 1997

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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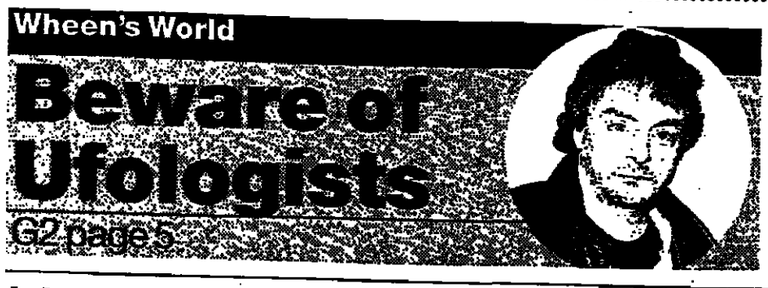
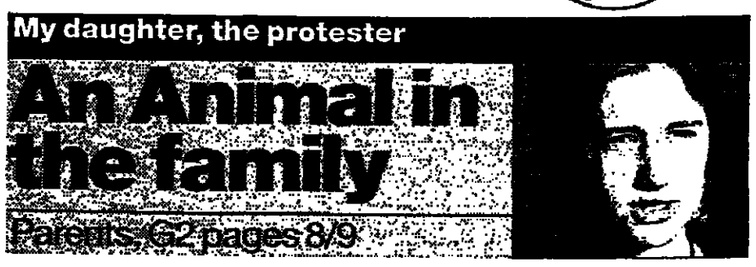




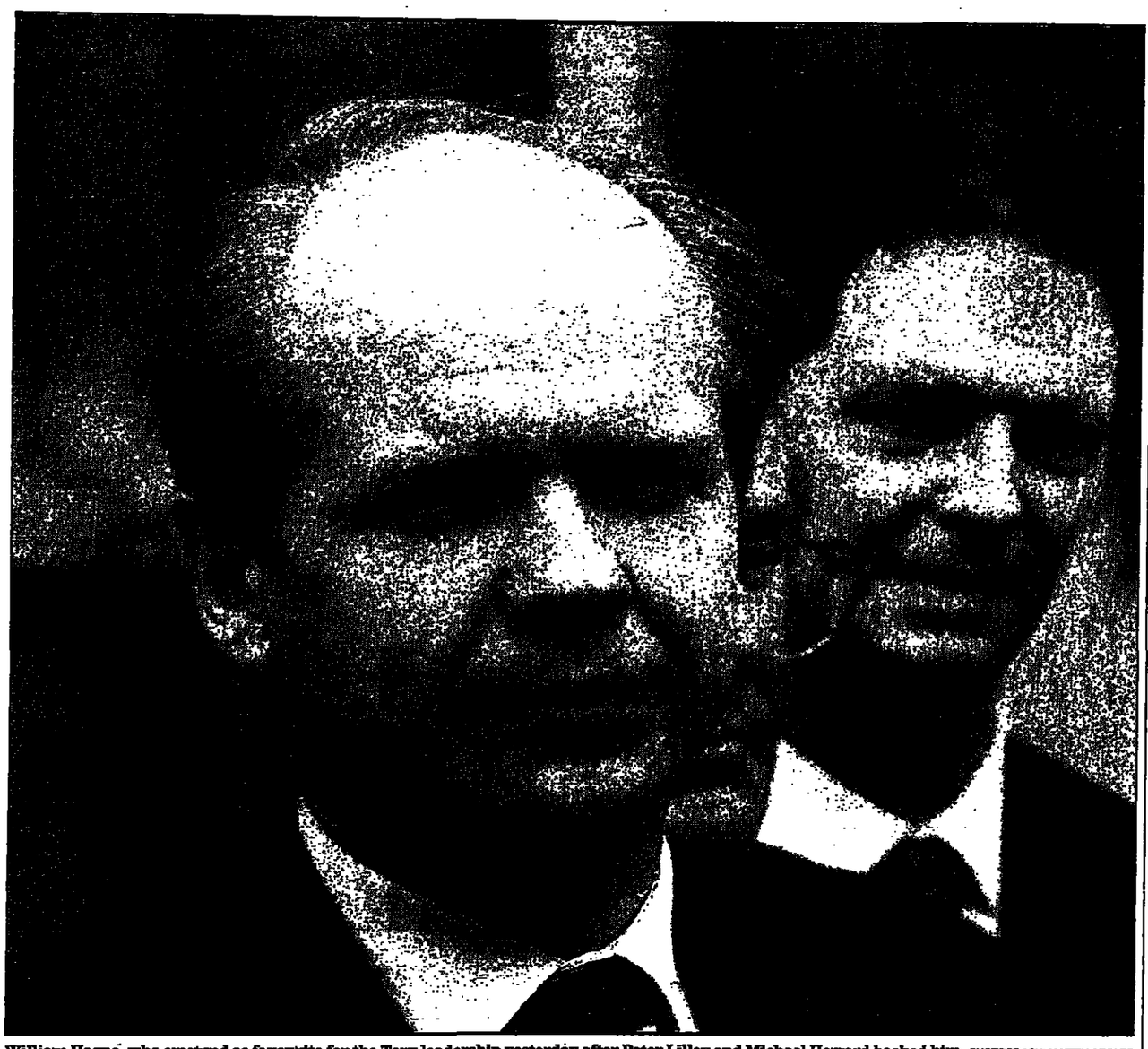
Environment

Is policing the trade in wildlife a licence to poach?

Society, G2 pages 12/13

Howard and Lilley pull out and urge supporters to back new favourite

Hague's bandwagon rolls



William Hague, who emerged as favourite for the Tory leadership yesterday after Peter Lilley and Michael Howard backed him PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

Michael White
Political Editor

THE fight for the Conservative leadership swung decisively against Kenneth Clarke last night after John Redwood unexpectedly forced Peter Lilley and Michael Howard out of the race — only to see them both back William Hague as the man best placed to beat the former chancellor.

Though Mr Redwood's narrow victory in the three-man rightwing "primary" briefly allowed him to claim the right to carry the Thatcherite standard into next Tuesday's second round, his hopes were quickly dashed.

Neither rival could bring himself to honour the informal pact between the trio — to support whichever of them came third to thwart the Keynesian Mr Clarke and "Hague the Vague", suspected of being a lightweight in the John Major mould.

In a first-round result that was widely seen as the worst scenario for Tory hopes of restoring a strong and united leadership, the left-leaning Mr Clarke headed the field with 49 votes — not as many as his backers had hoped — hotly pursued by the centre-right's Mr Hague on 41.

Mr Redwood, who resigned from John Major's cabinet to run a prophetic "no change, no chance" leadership bid in 1995, astonished MPs and pundits by beating both "True Right" rivals, with 27 votes to Mr Lilley's 24, leaving Mr Howard in a humiliating fifth place with just 23. All MPs voted.

The muddled result in the electoral college of 164 surviving Tory MPs triggered frenzied horse-trading at Westminster. Though Mr Redwood demanded the right to carry the Thatcherite banner into next Tuesday's second round, bitterness over his 1995 campaign lingers. As backstairs arm-twisting began, private talks between Mr Howard and Mr Lilley stitched up a deal to deliver as many as possible of their 47 votes to the 36-year-old Mr Hague. Mr Redwood, who spoke to both MPs, impotently protested. "Both Michael and Peter or their camps indicated that they thought the fourth and fifth-placed candidate should drop out and support the third-placed candidate. I am appealing to both Michael and Peter to do just that," he reminded them, in a plea to forge a common platform.

Anything is now possible. Some MPs were even predicting that Mr Clarke — who needs just six more votes, 55 out of 164, to be sure of surviving into the final round — might falter, leaving Mr Hague to fight Mr Redwood.

That seemed as implausible as the claim that up to eight Clarke supporters had voted for Mr Redwood as the easiest rightwinger to beat. "Cobblers," he said later, pointing to the accuracy of his own prediction of at least 27 votes. Four MPs let him down in late switches, prompted partly by the announcement by Tory HQ of the result of its canvass of grassroots opinion.

That showed Mr Clarke well ahead among local chairmen, MEPs (a clean sweep of all 17), peers and senior party workers, with 608 votes in all; Mr Hague second with 278; and the right trailing badly — Mr Howard worst of all, with just 26 informal votes.

As news filtered out that Mr Howard, hardline home secretary until Tony Blair's victory, was planning to back Mr Hague as the best "anyone but Clarke" candidate, Mr Redwood's hopes of glory started to evaporate. "That's the kind of man we're dealing with," said one Redwood campaign manager, accusing Mr Howard of "ratting".

On a day when the Guardian's ICM poll among ordinary voters, as well as Tory HQ's findings, showed him an overwhelming favourite, Mr Clarke issued a brief statement thanking his backers and proclaiming himself the man best able to bind up the party's wounds.

"I have today topped the poll in every test of Conservative opinion," he declared, pledging himself to "broaden my appeal further by setting out how I intend to lead this party on an inclusive basis" between now and next week's likely two rounds — Tuesday's followed by a final vote on Thursday.

Mr Redwood talked to Mr Howard privately immediately after the votes were declared at 5.20pm. But within minutes the ex-home secretary was said to be on the phone to Mr Lilley urging them both to back Mr Hague, who must now be reckoned firm favourite.

Redwood and Clarke allies were claiming that "switcher" voters would prefer either man of principle to the pragmatic trimming of Mr Hague. John Major Mark II according to foes. Hague strategists were busy promoting his rightwing credentials to seize Howard-Lilley votes.

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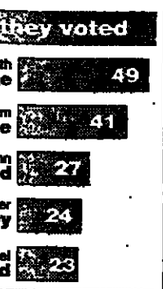
How they voted



'I have decided to withdraw and support William Hague. He is best placed to unite the party and lead us to victory'
Michael Howard

'My aims have always been to reunite, to rebuild and renew the party. William Hague is best placed to achieve those objectives'
Peter Lilley

Rinse 'n' fib cycle puts Tories in a right spin

Sketch

Simon Hoggart

AT about 5.15 a noise like a gunshot came from inside the Committee Room. "My God, Redwood's won," someone shouted. After all, the Tory party hasn't yet exhausted all the different ways of committing suicide.

But the bang was only the traditional desk-thumping before the Chairman of the 1922 Committee announces the result. This he did to gasps of astonishment and delight — though only from the press. Tory MPs looked more grim, as the implications of the vote sank in: John Redwood, written off as a certain loser at the weekend, might conceivably win. And William Hague, the human embryo, was in with an excellent chance.

(Though in people years he is 36, in Hague years he is already 69, and will be almost 80 at the next election. He will have to dance to his favourite Meat Loaf records with a Zimmer frame.)

Within seconds the committee corridor was a seething, hooching mass of Tory MPs, every one a spin doctor. We were back in Gyratory Gulch. It was like being inside a washing machine on the special rinse 'n' fib cycle.

The spin technique is to begin with the phrase: "It is perfectly clear . . ." or "it is abundantly clear to us . . ." followed by an assertion that your man is certain to win, even though he has done substantially worse than you were predicting in the morning.

When this is questioned the spinner switches to an aggressive yet pitying tone, like a schoolmaster dealing with a dim and obstreperous pupil. "He will win votes the only way he knows how, by advancing the clearest and best arguments, and by unifying the party."

A Redwood backer gleefully waved a bleeper in the air, like a drug dealer jubilant over a big score. "Look, he has bleeped us! He says, 'We are going all the way!' "

Mr Redwood does carry the air of a crazed cult leader. You half expect his supporters to celebrate with a pitcher of Kool-Aid.

Someone else was groaning. "The thought of listening to that voice, for 10 years . . ." He was probably talking about Mr Hague, but it could apply to any of them.

The noise level grew. "Our man is the only viable candidate who is not Clarke!" "Two weeks ago, Ken was written off. We were told he'd get 30 votes if he was lucky. Today he's shot down every duck in the row, bang, bang, bang."

Over on College Green, the strip of grass near the House of Lords, it looked like the end of a not very successful rock festival. Anyone who had set up a beer tent, or even a toilet, could have made a fortune.

I counted 19 camera crews before giving up. By the end they were interviewing each other, and even passing tourists, for whom the scene has become one of the sights, like the

turn to page 2, column 7

Prague Writers' Festival 1997

Texts for Nothing - Texty pro nic

The 7th Prague Writers' Festival presents a selection of fine authors from the Czech Republic and around the world. Meet them at the Franz Kafka Centre, Old Town Square, at 7pm from 24 to 28 June.

Tuesday 24 June
E.L. Doctorow — USA
Martin Vopěnka — Czech Republic
Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill — Ireland
Viola Fischerová — Czech Republic

Wednesday 25 June
André du Bouchet — France
Roland Jooris — Belgium
Vladimír Křivánek — Czech Republic
Giuseppe Conte — Italy

Thursday 26 June
Aharon Appelfeld — Israel
Zinovy Zinik — Russia
Jana Štroblová — Czech Republic
Raoul Schrott — Austria

Friday 27 June
Janice Galloway — Great Britain
Igor Pomerantsev — Russia
Elena Stefoi — Romania
Dimitris Nollas — Graece

Saturday 28 June
Julian Barnes — Great Britain
Hanna Krall — Poland
Michael March — USA
António Franco Alexandre — Portugal

The Prague Writers' Festival is dedicated to Samuel Beckett.

For further details, please contact the Festival Director, Michael March, Revoluční 28, 110 00 Prague 1. Mobile: + 420 602 371 478

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Catherine Cookson: outrage

Cookson rescues doomed gallery

THE SIGHT of placard-waving academics and artists demonstrating this week against the closure of a leading regional art gallery was too much for one of the country's most prolific authors, *writes Peter Hetherington.*

Dame Catherine Cookson — frail, bedridden and almost blind — was so outraged by Newcastle University's decision to axe its internationally renowned Hatton Gallery that she picked up the telephone yesterday afternoon and asked for a meeting with the powers that be.

Nigel Sherlock, stockbroker and chairman of the university council, scurried to her home a mile away. He picked up a cheque for £50,000 — enough to save the gallery — with the promise of a similar sum for the next five years.

Christopher Harris, the university's communications director, said: "At 2pm, she contacted us and said, 'Would you like to pop around and get some money?' There was very genuine shock as well as a very pleasant surprise."

Only a day before the council provoked anger throughout the international art world by deciding to withdraw funding of £40,000 from the Hatton, which includes a collection of paintings from Goya to Bacon and 12 tons of Dadaist art — notably the monumental construction, the Elterwater Merzbau.

After the closure proposal filtered through to staff and students in the fine art department just over a week ago, the director of the National Gallery registered his alarm with curators around the country.

South Shields-born Dame Catherine, aged 90 this month, who until recently had written a book a year since 1950, has provided a source of steady funding to the university, particularly its medical school. She has taken a special interest in the Hatton, attending the opening of an £80,000 extension in 1984.

Vice-chancellor James Wright said of her latest gesture: "I am most delighted by this rapid and remarkable response." The university was well on the way to raising £100,000 annually to revitalise the gallery "as a vibrant contribution to the region".

Meanwhile, Dame Catherine was keeping quiet. Interviewed last year, she said: "I still try to put down bits of work on tape when I can." She has said nothing publicly since.

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AITKEN LIBEL CASE

Aitken 'weaved web of lies'

Luke Harding

JONATHAN Aitken's account of his controversial stay at the Paris Ritz was a "web of lies" in which "improbability was heaped on improbability", the High Court heard yesterday.

The former Conservative MP was accused of inventing a "catalogue of coincidences" to explain his visit to the hotel in September 1993 while minister for defence procurement.

George Carman QC, for the Guardian and Granada Television, said Mr Aitken had "weaved a tangled web" to conceal the fact that he had improperly held a business meeting with Arab associates and allowed an Arab friend to pay his hotel bill.

"When you add up that catalogue of improbability, do you not realise how scandalous, incredible and preposterous your story is?" Mr Carman asked.

"I don't realise any such thing," Mr Aitken replied. "I flatly reject these flamboyant allegations made to me. This may be a complex story but it is not one based on a web of deceit. There are good honest explanations for all the points put to me."

The High Court was told that on 13 points Mr Aitken's evidence was "tainted with improbability". He had "covered his tracks" in a letter written to the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin Butler, and had "pursued a conspiratorial agreement" with his Arab friend Said Ayas to explain the fact that his bill had been added to Mr Ayas's account, Mr Carman said.

He also dismissed Mr Aitken's suggestion that he had been "set up" by the Ritz, or that his offer to pay by credit card had been refused by hotel staff.

The former MP was asked about a statement from a Ritz cashier who said his hotel bill for the weekend of September 17-19 1993 was paid by a "brunette lady of European aspect speaking French".

Mr Aitken says this was his wife, Lolicia, who paid 4,257 francs in cash for what she believed to be the full balance of his two-night stay, *although it was in fact more* than £400 short.

Indicating the blonde tresses of Mrs Aitken, sitting in court, Mr Carman said: "Your wife is not a brunette now, is she?"

Mr Aitken: "She's not this week."

Mr Carman: "Last week or the week before?"

Mr Aitken: "Yes, she defiantly stuck to the latest colour of her hair, even though she was well aware I would be cross-examined on this subject."

Mr Carman said his wife's passport described her as blonde.

Mr Aitken replied: "She has over the years tried many shades."

'When you add up that catalogue of improbability, do you not realise how scandalous, incredible and preposterous your story is?'
George Carman QC

'I don't realise any such thing. I flatly reject these flamboyant allegations . . . There are good honest explanations for all the points put to me.'
Jonathan Aitken

The court was told that Manon Vidal, secretary of the treasurer to Saudi prince Mohammed bin Fahd, was a French-speaking brunette. Mr Carman said it was she who had paid Mr Aitken's bill, while settling the prince's account with a cheque for 117,000 francs and 4,257 francs in cash.

Mr Aitken, who lost his Thanet South seat at the general election on May 1, said his wife had paid the bill after returning to Paris from Switzerland on Sunday morning. But he admitted: "My wife has been unable to recall the precise details of what did happen — all that Carry on Arabia scene around the Ritz cashier desk on that afternoon."

Mr Carman: "You say your wife paid it?"

Mr Aitken: "I can't even now grip it — exactly who did what — I wasn't there."

Mr Aitken also told the court he had made a telephone call on Sunday morning to his wife's hotel in Switzerland — after she had left — and spoken to his mother-in-law. The two women had shared a room together the previous night, he added.

However, records from the Hotel Bristol in the Swiss town of Villars showed Mrs Aitken had only been charged a single occupancy rate for her Saturday night stay, Mr Carman said.

"You invented the story of your mother-in-law staying that night so she could be the recipient of your telephone call," he added.

"I didn't invent any such thing," Mr Aitken replied.

Earlier, the former Tory MP admitted that he had failed to declare a "magnificent" watch from a brother-in-law of the Saudi king in the Commons register of members' interests. But he denied the gift had amounted to personal enrichment.

He said that the "flashy" lady's watch was not much good to him, as he had worn the same timepiece for 20 years. He had given it to his wife or a secretary.

The existence of the watch was revealed in a letter written by Mr Aitken which was faxed to the Guardian on Monday evening by an anonymous male telephone caller, the court was told.

Dated July 1988, it thanked a prominent Arab, Dr Abdullah Masri, for his hospitality, and asked him to pass on Mr Aitken's "warm thanks" to Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ibraham for "his most generous gift of that magnificent watch".

Mr Aitken enclosed a local authority planning document confirming that an address in Upper Grosvenor Street, central London, which the Ibraham family were buying, had full permission for office use beyond 1990.

He ended the letter: "I hope this is helpful. With all good wishes. Yours ever, *Jonathan.*"

Asked if he should have entered the watch as a gift on the register of members' interests, if it was valued at over £125, Mr Aitken said it was a matter of judgment. "I didn't regard it as some sort of personal enrichment of myself. It was never insured."

Mr Aitken, who, until his resignation in July 1995, was Chief Secretary to the Treasury, is suing over allegations that he provided prostitutes for Arabs, was financially dependent upon them, and was involved in secret arms deals.

The Guardian and Granada deny libel and plead justification. The trial, which is being held without a jury, continues.

Jonathan and Lolicia Aitken outside the High Court yesterday. PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

China wants tanks early in Hong Kong

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong and Ian Black

CHINA is demanding that the People's Liberation Army start moving weapons and armour into Hong Kong before the end of British rule, further straining a hand-over poisoned by an escalating diplomatic and legal rumpus over Beijing's plans to install a puppet legislature in the early hours of July 1.

Britain immediately rejected the call, insisting that it remains the sovereign power until midnight on June 30, and that no other military presence will be allowed before then.

With British agreement, the PLA has already sent an advance guard of nearly 200 unarmed men to prepare for the arrival of up to 10,000 troops. But, according to a Communist Party mouthpiece in Hong Kong, the PLA now needs to bring in guns and other military hardware before Britain's retreat.

The demand came as Hong Kong's Democratic Party filed a court injunction to challenge the legitimacy of a hand-picked legislative assembly packed with pro-China politicians.

The body is also under attack from Western governments, with Madeleine Albright, the United States secretary of state, announcing she will boycott a swearing-in cermony for its 60 members.

British officials said last night that Tony Blair had not yet decided whether to visit Hong Kong for the hand-over.

Wen Wei Po, an authoritative Beijing-funded Hong Kong newspaper, published a robust editorial demanding that Britain let Chinese arms and other equipment into the territory early. It said the PLA would have to be armed and ready to take over security duties at midnight on June 30.

But the Foreign Office said: "We are the sovereign power and we remain responsible for the defence of Hong Kong until June 30. Ministers are committed to working with China to ensure a smooth and succesful transition, but there's no question of Britain agreeing to this."

The governor, Chris Patten, the former Conservative Party chairman, whose modest democratic reforms China wants dismantled as soon as it takes over, suggested that foreign dignitaries attending the hand-over ceremony may follow the US lead and stay away from the legislature's investiture, scheduled just 90 minutes into July 1.

Prince Charles will represent Britain at a midnight hand-over gala, and a usually reliable Hong Kong newspaper, Ming Pao, reported yesterday that China's Communist Party chief, Jiang Zemin, would also attend.

The presence of security-obsessed Beijing leaders might explain the sudden demand for weapons before the ceremony.

Some 40,000 security personnel are being mobilised on the Chinese side of the border, according to reports, to stop illegal crossings and ensure order after June 30.

Albert Ho, a Democratic Party legislator, filed a writ in the high court yesterday asking it to declare "null and void" all legislation "read or passed" before July 1 by the pro-Beijing provisional legislature. Mr Ho said the body had "unlawfully seized lawmaking power which belongs solely to the present Legislative Council".

Rinse 'n' fib cycle puts the Tory party in a right spin

continued from page 1

pigeons in Trafalgar Square.

The Mexicans for Portillo had returned, this time with a band (as in the old joke, "What's that noise?" "Maracas." "I've got some ointment, if that would help.")

Michael Heseltine, Mr Redwood, or Jeffrey Archer would try to make some grave point about the future of their great party, if it has one, and the Mexicans would come weaving past in the background, keening traditional laments about the result in Enfield (Southgate).

But the spinning had gone on all day inside the Commons, as if convincing the outside world that your man would win might actually help his chances. And why should anyone want the job? Years of hard work with no hope of reward; you might as well take up nursing.

(Though the Leader of the Opposition does have two perks: a chauffeur-driven car, and the chance to meet a real politician. Tony Blair, once or twice a month for secret briefings.)

Voting Tories were welcomed into Committee Room 14 by one of their Whips' Messengers, an amiable and dapperly dressed man called Vince. It has come to something when Tory MPs are ushered by men called Vince wearing yellow shoes.

One of the earliest voters was David "Not Quite Enough Brains" Willetts, who backed Lilley, and one of the latest Ted Heath. "I don't see any need for a second ballot," he said. We veteran Heath-watchers know how that translates: at least one vote for Clarke. He harrumphed on his way.

First motorway bus lane planned on M4

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

BRITAIN'S first motorway bus lane is being planned by the Government as an immediate demonstration of its commitment to an integrated transport system.

The three mile route on the M4 to give public transport a faster route from central London to Heathrow airport will run on one of the busiest sections of motorway in Europe.

It is expected to start at the end of the elevated section of the M4 beyond Heston where the road becomes a three-lane highway, and could cut at least 15 minutes off the bus journey time from central London to Heathrow, which is now about 75 minutes.

Under the plan, which is likely to be finalised next week, the bus lane would be separated from the rest of the motorway and the hard shoulder by a small wall. Cars would be banned from the lane and would face a considerable fine if they attempted to use it.

Orders seeking approval will have to be laid before Parliament. So long as the route is on the line of the existing motorway, ministers do not have to take the matter to a public inquiry.

The lane will run as far as junction 4 on the motorway, the main exit to terminals 1, 2 and 3 at Heathrow.

The plan appeals to the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, because it is relatively cheap to build, apart from the wall and new directional signs.

If the lane is built on the existing motorway route, it would reduce the number of lanes for other traffic to two and could cause congestion. For this reason, the Government is expected to say that the plan is an experiment. The route is the busiest out of London with a huge traffic volume going past Heathrow to Wales and the West.

The motoring organisations can hardly raise much objection to the experiment because it meets their belief that the public will back a properly integrated transport system in which the car has its place. Transport planners argue that the idea makes sense, and is part of a co-ordinated strategy to get people to use public transport to reach Heathrow.

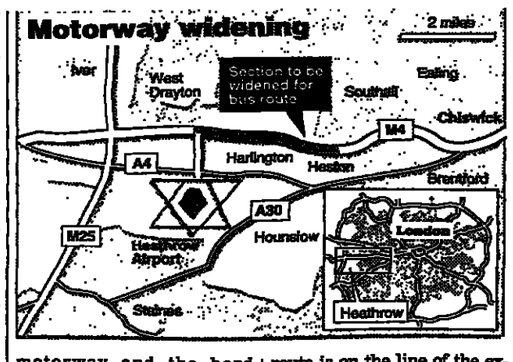
The new £400 million Heathrow Express 15 minute rail link between Paddington and the airport will be fully open next year and will lead to less car congestion on the motorway between central London and the airport.

An even more effective rail route is due to be opened between St Pancras and Heathrow in 1999 with four trains an hour.

This journey will take only 35 minutes compared to an hour on the London Underground.

The plan also suggests that the Government is likely to approve the controversial Terminal 5 extension for Heathrow when the longest running public inquiry concludes next year.

The bus lane will be seen as part of the Government's plan to make sure that more than 50 per cent of passengers using Heathrow come and go on public transport.



An excess of mindless company car rock

Review

Pat Kane

INXS
Glasgow Barrowlands

KARAOKE Jagger. Drip-dry stadium rock. Australian sexual prowess. And, to top it all, that truly evocative name. Come now, if you were launching a new kind of under-arm deodorant for over-excitable adults, how could you resist calling it INXS?

You couldn't. Because you would have cultural instincts as duff as a rave vicar. You would have the stylistic resonance of flat beer. And therefore you would be just like Michael Hutchence and his cheesemungous crew, who hauled their journeymen's sorry asses on stage at Glasgow Barrowlands to deliver what the higher paleontologists often call A Rock 'n' Roll Show.

Murder, murder in my heart. Oi, Hutchence! No! Whovever told you that your primly athletic, Marks-&-Spencer-microwaveable machismo was anything other than plastic cabaret? You look like Dave Gahan, toned, with added chin; your hair is dyed as bottle-black as the most listless shopping-mall goth. You are a sight, sir. Tonight's thirty-somethings love the very sweat that flicks from your endlessly proffered buttocks, and thrill to your every K-Tel white soul warble. But I know you for what you are: the last long fart of the Eighties.

It's all there, style-decade fans: the incompetent sax solos, the concrete-like funk, the blonde backing singers, the military click tracks, the misogynistic-lipstick imagery ("Suicide Blonde," "Elegantly Wasted"), the general air of pointlessness.

Musically, as the songs lumbered past me like lorries at an intersection, I was reminded of why this band are so irritating. You'd imagine the most homogenising pop producer leaving their session in disgust. "Nothing to do, mate! They've squeezed all the life out of it already!"

It's all so screamingly competent, so industrially together, that you pray for a Brian Rix moment: Hutchence's paint-on trousers to come fluttering round his knees, the guitarist's froideur to shatter under the force of a particularly uncontrollable burping fit.

My God, anything to disturb the well-oiled flow of company car rock before us. That's it! That's what I keep thinking of — Castrol GTX equals INXS.

Put them both in your car, or something. "Hey, this is what we call in Australia a pub venue!" drawls the Hutch. "We're playing a pub!" You always were, convict.

The hall enjoys itself, but it's smaller than the original stadium venue booked for this gig, and a patchy night for the Barrowlands anyway. And if anything evidences the lingering death of New Wave, it's this kind of mindless, lunchtime-libido bounce-along. Rock aristos, artful tousling, tuneless saxophones, Paula Yates, Paula Yates, Keith Richards rip-off riffs, depilliating light-shows, Paula Yates. Here's another mnemonic for you: ENDXS — please.

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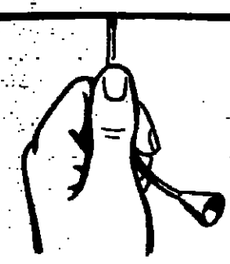

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EYEWITNESS

Witness at close range to a savage battle in which the Taliban's main ally turned against it in the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif, PHIL GOODWIN — correspondent for the Guardian and BBC — found himself pinned down by an intense firefight, and then stranded.

With anti-Taliban gunmen in control of the city and a fresh column of 2,000 Taliban reinforcements reported to be approaching, the last United Nations evacuation convoy left the city.

A large crowd began looting the UN offices. One vehicle, carrying all the gear of the BBC crew, was attacked. Everything was taken, including Goodwin's passport. The film editor, Vladimir Lozinski, and cameraman, Andrew Herbert, escaped the mob only through the bravery of a taxi driver.

The group drove to safety and anti-Taliban troops escorted them out of the city towards the border bridge over the Oxus river into Uzbekistan.

Without a passport, Goodwin was refused entry by the Uzbeks, who escorted him back to Afghanistan. Next day they relented, and three days after the capture of Mazar-i-Sharif, he crossed into Uzbekistan.

Taking on the Taliban... the sweep through Afghanistan finally met bloody resistance from the forces of the rebel leader General Abdul Malik in Mazar-i-Sharif PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID STEWART-SMITH

A city too far for blundering Taliban

IT COULD have been the perfect ending to immortalise the Taliban's reputation as a conquering force before which most of Afghanistan had simply bowed in surrender. The last major prize in the country, Mazar-i-Sharif, was captured with few shots fired, and the self-styled Islamic warriors did not even have to take it themselves.

A faction from among their former enemies had switched sides to join them, swept into the northern city and then invited the Taliban in. But within days, the relationship went horribly wrong.

Naivety has been punished many times in Afghanistan, but seldom so savagely. The troops who had invited the Taliban in were naive to think they would be allowed to keep their weapons: the Taliban have been disarming the people everywhere they go. The Taliban, in turn, were foolhardy in demanding the four-wheel drive vehicles belonging to their new allies — the rebel leadership of General Abdul Malik. They also tore down posters of Gen Malik's brother.

In a back street in the east of Mazar-j-Sharif, a fortnight ago, I saw the incident that marked the turning of the city, which remains in Gen Malik's hands.

Small numbers of the mainly Sunni Taliban, on their first day there, went looking for arms and ammunition. At the end of the street was a mosque used by mainly Shi'ite ethnic Hazaras, fiercely opposed to giving up their means of defence. There was a confrontation and eight Taliban soldiers were shot.

The Taliban were allowed to retrieve the bodies. A jeep with the bodies piled upon each other in the back, jigging eerily up and down, made its way back up the bumpy dirt street as local people peered from behind half-closed doors.

A shocked Taliban commander and his remaining troops lifted the bodies out one by one. One Taliban soldier, covered in blood from holding his dying friend had to be restrained from running towards the mosque for revenge. Gen Malik's security chief calmed them down and persuaded them to leave.

But a pick-up truck full of Taliban fighters came back on the attack afterwards, and sped towards the mosque. It never reached it.

Long bursts of automatic fire cut into the Taliban. Then, as more Taliban troops arrived in support, local people turned against them and the east of Mazar-i-Sharif became a killing ground. It is a maze of small streets divided by a main road. Few buildings are more then one storey high, and there is no easy vantage point over the area.

I was on a street near the main road when about 40 Taliban soldiers came into view. With the sound of gunfire all around them, they were sauntering along the main road. Their weapons were not raised at the ready. Some were talking to each other. A truck with Taliban soldiers packed in the back was driving slowly alongside: it was a bizarre picture of serenity.

From windows and doors around them, local people began to fire. Taliban soldiers fell dead and wounded. And the others stood still.

Some panicked and fired into the air, but none took cover. Experienced fighters would have grouped together and have started fighting building by building. The Taliban did not have a clue.

As bullets hit the wall behind me, I ran down the street into a small house with an entrance without a door. Inside, an old man with a grey turban was sitting against a wall. There was no back way out. We managed to exchange one word, "Taliban", before there was the sound of feet at the entrance.

A group of 10 Taliban soldiers, breathing heavily, turbans awry, followed each other inside. Most were young boys, wide-eyed with terror, limply carrying their Kalashnikovs, looking for guidance to an older man who himself appeared petrified. He grabbed a jug and poured water over his face. The boys followed suit. They were shouting at each other, pointing in different directions, not knowing where to go.

Bullets started to hit the house around the doorway. They had been spotted by local people from a house opposite. It was a matter of time before heavy fire descended. The boys were flinching at every shot. During a lull of a few seconds I made a run from the door and crawled down the street to behind an abandoned truck.

I managed to get away. Some local people gave me shelter. I was trapped by the fighting for a day and a half, listening to the Taliban being hunted down. They had split into tiny groups. Some who had managed to hide during the night made a run for it at first light. They were easily picked off. When it was over, there were mounds of bodies.

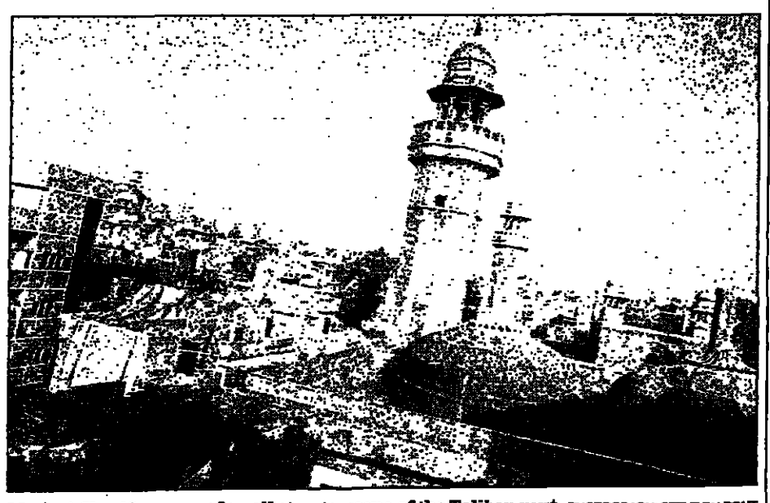
I went back to the house where I had left the Taliban boys. It had been destroyed by a rocket-propelled grenade. The walls had been riddled with gunfire. When I think of the Taliban now, it is their faces I see — men too young to grow a beard, too young to remember a time when Afghanistan was not at war.

I had seen the Taliban capture and keep two other cities, Jalalabad and the capital Kabul, last year. They yielded to the Taliban administration without resistance. Mazar-i-Sharif initially followed the pattern. The people had really welcomed their arrival, saying they were willing to accept the Taliban's strict Islamic measures as the price of peace.

But it is a measure of the delicate balancing act facing any one group attempting to take over the whole country that one small breach of trust and respect can lead to a bloodbath. And ominously for the Taliban, their leaders show no sign that they have learnt a lesson.

'From windows and doors, local people began to fire. Taliban soldiers fell dead and wounded. And the others stood still

Some panicked and fired into the air, but none took cover. Experienced fighters would have grouped together and have started fighting building by building. The Taliban did not have a clue'



Mazar-i-Sharif, a maze of small streets, scene of the Taliban rout PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE DU PONT

Stay of execution for Millennium Dome

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

THE future of the Millennium Dome, the exhibition planned at Greenwich to celebrate the start of the new century, was cast into doubt again yesterday after the Treasury attempted to kill it off at a meeting of Cabinet ministers.

But the proposed £580 million project was given a stay of execution by the intervention of Peter Mandelson, the minister without portfolio.

The project will remain in limbo while ministers look in detail at the proposal which has been dogged by controversy since its inception last year. It will go to the full Cabinet for a final decision.

Dominating the discussion was what most of the ministers saw as a shortage of ideas about what the dome will house. They said the emphasis should be on celebration and education, and the mood after the meeting was that there was little sign of either in the proposal.

The issue was discussed by the Cabinet's home and social affairs committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott. The issue falls under the remit of the Heritage Secretary, Chris Smith.

The committee heard a presentation on the future of the dome from Jenny Page, chairwoman of the Millennium Commission, which is responsible for distribution of lottery funds for millennium celebrations. About £200 million is earmarked for the project.

Mr Mandelson's intervention was seen by ministers as a signal that Tony Blair was reluctant to see the project killed off. But some ministers fear it could become a money-losing disaster. So far £120 million has been spent on clearing the site, in south London, and £24 million on design and development.

The Treasury would like to see the £24 million written off rather than spend more public money on the project.

Labour agonised over the project in January this year and came close to scuppering it but the intervention of Mr Blair kept it afloat.

As well as deciding the exhibition should have elements of fun and education, ministers agreed it should be durable, not dismantled after a couple of years as planned. If the organisers can not meet these requirements, it is unlikely to go ahead.

Their dispute is not just a clash of personalities. It is also a principled argument about what Darwinian theory can tell us about the world; it is a rather less principled argument about religion; and, finally, it is a gang fight between a largely British team and a largely American one.

G2 cover story

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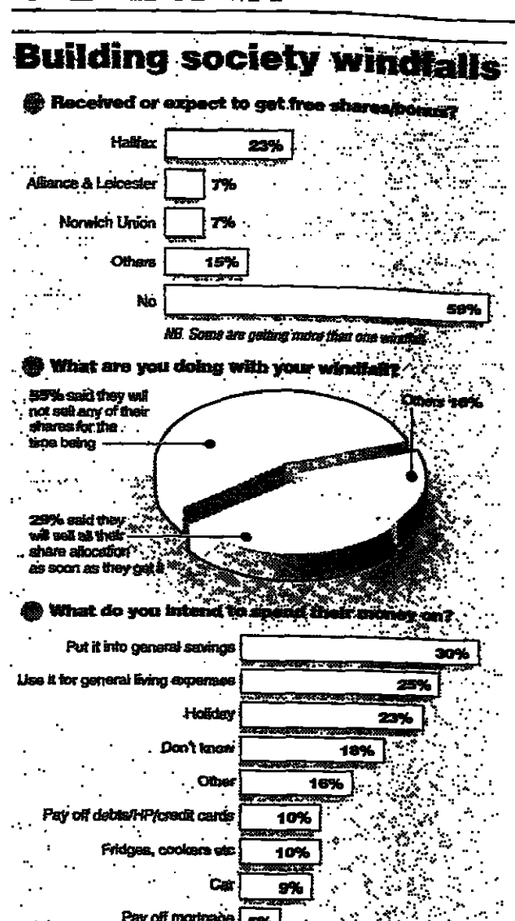

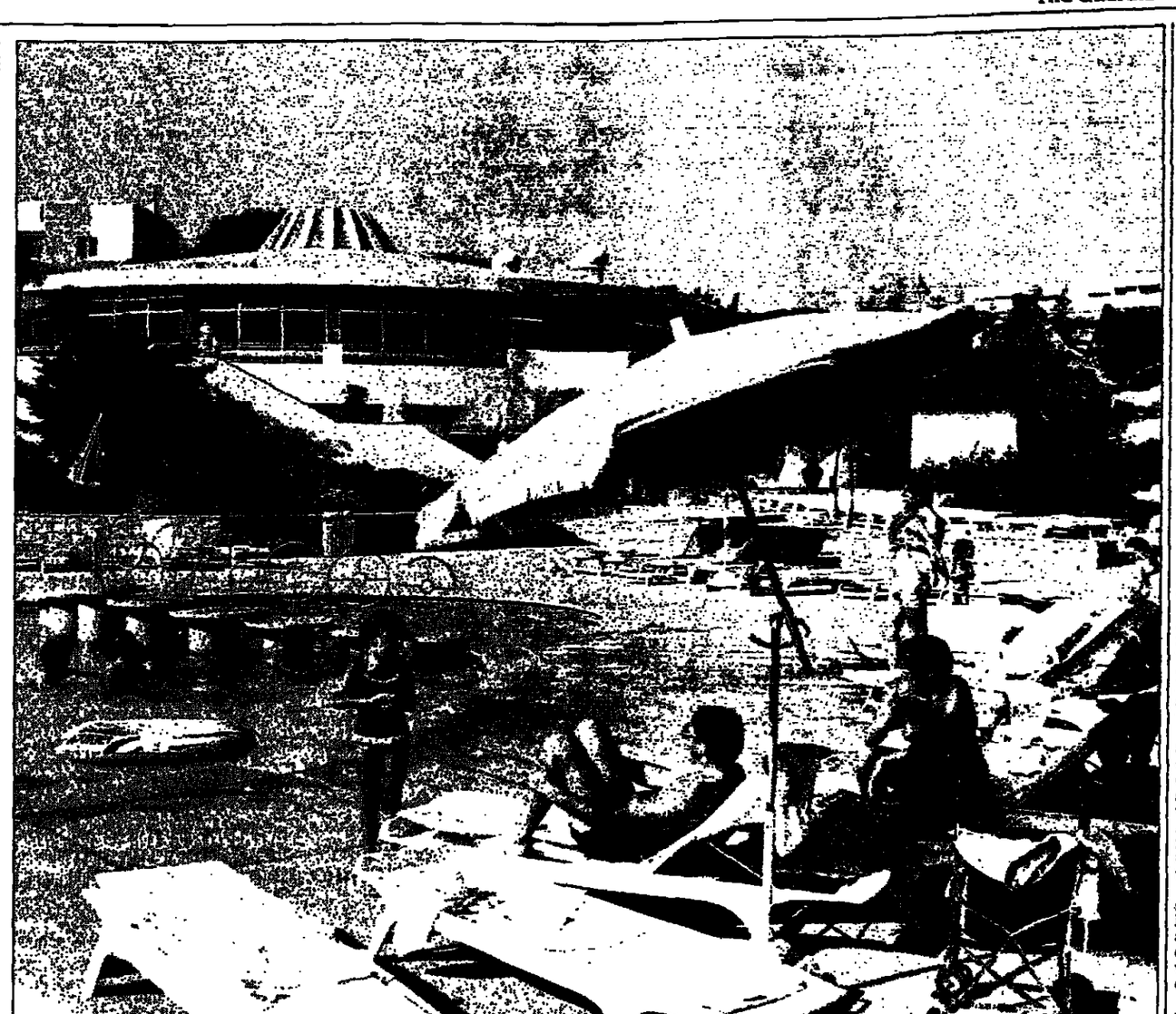

Of those planning to sell their shares, nearly a quarter intend to spend the money on a holiday PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

Holidays, fridges and cars on the shopping list in building society summer windfall. Alan Travis reports

Share giveaway spending boom

FOUR out of ten households expect to get an average of £2,000 each as a result of the free shares bonanza in building society and insurance windfalls this summer, according to a new Guardian/ICM opinion poll.

More than 25 per cent say they expect to sell their shares immediately, fuelling a high street spending boom on holidays, fridges, cookers and cars that could be worth more than £4 billion.

The scale of the expected boom exceeds earlier estimates from the Bank of England that between 5 and 10 per cent would be spent and the rest used to pay off debt or saved.

The new poll also confirms speculation that more of the better off — some 48 per cent — will receive windfall shares than those on below average incomes, of whom only 30 per cent are benefiting. But the poll also shows that the size of the individual windfalls — about £2,000 — is roughly the same across the social classes.

It is thought that this is because significant numbers of the poorer people receiving them are pensioners with long-term savings policies and insurance accounts.

The £30 billion shares giveaway peaked last week with the conversion of the Halifax building society into a bank. Nearly 8 million people gained an instant profit of between £1,500 and £10,000. The Norwich Union follows the "demutualisation" road next Monday, with the Woolwich building society next month.

The poll shows that 40 per cent have received or expect to get free shares or bonuses from the change in status of the Halifax, the Alliance and Leicester, the Norwich Union, the Woolwich, and the Northern Rock, and as a result of the takeovers of Scottish Amicable and the Bristol and West building society.

Most will only get one handout but a lucky 9 per cent are receiving more than one windfall — some as many as three or more. Asked about their intentions, some 29 per cent said they would sell all their allocation as soon as they got it; 55 per cent said they would hang on to it all for the time being; and 16 per cent would sell only some shares or had not yet made up their minds.

Of those who did intend to sell, only one in eight said they intended to use the money to pay off existing debts such as mortgages and credit cards. About 30 per cent said they would put it into "general savings".

But the rest said they would spend the money on a holiday (23 per cent); on general living expenses (25 per cent); on "white goods" such as washing machines (10 per cent); or on buying a car (9 per cent).

Fears of the impact of this boom on the economy led to the Bank of England's decision to increase interest rates last Friday. The new banks, particulary the Halifax and the Abbey National, raised their mortgage rates within minutes of the Bank's decision.

The Building Societies Association, representing the remaining "mutuals" which have not converted to banks, were not slow to point out the implication. "It really is a case of short-term gain followed by long-term pain," claimed a spokesman.

"Once the sun tan fades from that free holiday, people will find they are paying more for their mortgages and getting less interest on their savings."

● ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,202 adults aged 18-plus by telephone between June 6 and 7. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

Jail for bullies linked to girl's suicide

Erlend Clouston

TWO schoolgirl bullies whose "cowardly" attack on a fellow pupil helped drive her to suicide were each jailed for three months yesterday.

Michelle McBratney and Lee Ann Murray, both aged 17, were ordered to terms in a youth detention centre for their roles in a gang assault on 16-year-old Katherine Jane Morrison in Stornoway, Western Isles, in December 1996.

The two girls were in tears as Sheriff Ian Cameron pronounced sentences in the case which has tarnished the tranquil image of the Isle of Lewis. "Bullying is intolerable and must be punished," the judge declared.

Katherine, a pupil at Stornoway's renowned Nicholson Institute, took an overdose three months after being set upon by an all-girl gang who had harassed her before. A telephone call on the evening she killed herself is said to have warned her of more trouble ahead.

Lawyers for the two girls said after yesterday's court hearing that Murray would appeal against sentence and conviction, while McBratney would challenge her sentence only.

Katherine Morrison's parents were not in court to hear Sheriff Cameron condemn the schoolgirls for "evilly" taking it upon themselves to assault their daughter. He described the plan for the mass attack outside Stornoway's Woolworth store as "cowardly".

An earlier hearing was told how Katherine, a bright pupil who intended to go into journalism or management, had suffered a 15-minute beating in front of 25 bystanders who failed to intervene.

Murray and McBratney, among five originally charged, denied responsibility for Katherine's injuries. McBratney tried to denounce others to the police.

Katherine was found dead in her bedroom on February 5 last year. In suicide notes to her parents and a school friend she said persistent bullying had made life miserable, and complained she was depressed, particularly by the effect the hostility was having on her schoolwork.

IRA fires at covert army vehicle as plastic bullets withdrawn

Duncan Campbell in Belfast and David Fairhall

THE IRA opened fire on an unmarked army vehicle in the centre of Londonderry yesterday, adding further confusion to the talks process in Northern Ireland on its first anniversary.

The shooting came as the Government announced the withdrawal of a batch of plastic bullets because they are too dangerous.

The shooting of the undercover vehicle at lunchtime yesterday came almost at the moment that talks resumed at Stormont over the issue of decommissioning weapons. The IRA claimed responsibility, suggesting that an officer had been wounded, but both the RUC and the army denied any shots had struck the vehicle.

The Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, said at the end of the latest round of talks that continued contact with Sinn Fein was "dependent on what the situation on the ground is. What Sinn Fein has to realise is that the ball is in their court."

Ms Mowlam said she accepted that more progress could have been made in the year that has elapsed since talks began and that all parties would have to move faster. Commenting on the announcement by Lord Gilbert, the defence procurement minister, of the withdrawal of a batch of plastic bullets deemed to be too dangerous, she said: "I regret what's happened because it will cause distrust and worry in the community."

She accepted that there was a likelihood of compensation claims from people who had been hit by the bullets, but added: "We wouldn't have to go through this if we didn't have civil disturbances."

The RUC fired 7,000 rounds of the bullets last year, and the army fired 1,387. They are being withdrawn because they are found to travel faster than the recommended speed.

Solicitor Padraig McDermott, who represents a number of people injured by plastic bullets, said anyone struck by one could seek compensation from the chief constable of the RUC and the Ministry of Defence.

"It would be our contention that the use of plastic bullets was unreasonable force," he said. "They don't allow these weapons in Britain, but they're allowed here."

Mark Durkan, the Social Democratic and Labour Party councillor from Londonderry said at yesterday's talks: "We don't believe there's such a thing as a safe plastic bullet."

Gregory Campbell of the Democratic Unionist Party told the meeting: "It's an indication that the IRA wants it both ways. They want to hold out the tantalising possibility of peace and still try to kill people."

The technical name for the four inch-long plastic bullets used in Northern Ireland is "baton rounds", because being hit by them is supposed to be equivalent to a blow from a truncheon or baton. To meet this specification they are designed to be fired from special guns at muzzle velocity of no more than 70 metres per second (156 mph). But some of the rounds were found to travel at up to 76 metres per second.

A sperm whale and her calf in the Atlantic. Hunters can get £100,000 for a fully-grown male sperm whale PHOTOGRAPH: DOUG PERRINE

Prison girl freed on strict terms

David Ward

A GIRL aged 12 returned to a children's home yesterday after spending six days on remand at an adult prison on the Isle of Man.

Last week a magistrate sent her to a modern unit attached to the overcrowded Victorian prison in Douglas when she refused to accept bail conditions that would have allowed her to stay in a children's home.

After yesterday's hearing in chambers, a deemster, an Isle of Man judge, agreed the girl should get bail. The conditions are thought to be that she stays at the children's home and does not go out unaccompanied. She is due in court today to face charges of assault and criminal damage.

Terence McDonald, representing the girl on behalf of social services, said: "She is very happy and we are all pleased. Obviously she should never have been locked up."

The island's director of social services, David Cooke, said: "As a matter of principle we don't want to see kids in custody. Social services and her solicitor put together a package of measures to allow her to return to the same residential unit. The home will have more staff, which will make it safer for her and the staff."

The girl was said to be in moral danger when she appeared last week. But she was jailed when she refused to accept she should live at the home and not leave unaccompanied.

The next day she returned to court but refused to enter the courtroom and was sent to the juvenile unit at the prison.

The unit was the only place available. "We have very few people in that unit and it is empty for most of the year," said Mr Cooke. "We have only 23 juveniles a year on the island who re-offend, and there is not a major problem. There are very few occasions when any juveniles need to be locked up."

Bra makers help in war on cancer

Chris Mihill
Medical Correspondent

LINGERIE manufacturers yesterday backed a drive to persuade women to examine their breasts, in an attempt to cut breast cancer deaths.

Rigby and Peller, and Fantasie are supporting a campaign by the Royal Marsden hospital, London, to improve breast awareness.

More than a million detachable plastic labels are to be attached to bras sold by the two firms.

The idea came from nursing specialist Nikki Burch, from the Marsden, and was launched in London with help from celebrities including Jill Dando and Diana Moran, the EastEnders actress Wendy Richard, who had breast cancer diagnosed last year, and model Sophie Dahl.

Ms Burch said: "Being breast aware is a positive message, as nine out of 10 breast lumps are benign. I thought of the idea to attach labels to bras to encourage more women, especially young women, to be more aware of the need for regular breast examination."

The labels state: "Be breast aware. Changes to look and feel for: lumpy areas, a lump, dimpling, creases, nipple changes, nipple discharge, new or persistent pain, increase or decrease in size. Check any of the above changes with your doctor."

The campaign was also backed by Linda McCartney, who is recovering from breast cancer.

She said: "Breast cancer can strike any woman at any time.

"It does not respect the young and healthy, who can easily be duped into believing they are immune from this dreadful disease.

"Like older women, they must regularly examine themselves and be alert to any changes in their breasts. This won't prevent them getting the disease, but it will hugely increase their chances of successfully fighting it."

Gunboat sent for 'pirates'

12 animals reported killed for sale to Japanese market in breach of ban. Paul Brown reports

A GUNBOAT is being sent to try to catch a group of "pirates" killing whales in the Atlantic for the lucrative Japanese market, a British charity said yesterday.

So far 12 whales have been reported killed or harpooned and fastened alive to buoys for collection by factory ships about 200 miles west of the Azores. The Portuguese government is sending a naval vessel to investigate after reports that some of the carcasses are in its 200 mile territorial waters.

Yesterday the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), which is collating reports, mainly from Atlantic yachts, said this was a serious breach of the international ban on whaling.

The pirate fleet can expect to get £100,000 for the carcass of a fully grown male sperm whale, which can reach 50 tonnes in weight. The mid-Atlantic ridge off the Azores was a traditional hunting ground for the sperm whale, but the Portuguese whaling industry was wound up in 1985 when the species became endangered.

Reports of dead whales began to come in on May 13 and have continued since. There have been 12 separate sightings of dead whales with precise co-ordinates and nine reports of unusual and very large buoys in the area, with no identification marks. Some of the dead whales had radar reflectors attached to them for easy location by the factory ship.

One yacht, Globana, based in George Town in the Cayman islands, was sailing from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean when it reported unidentified "objects without any lights" on May 27 and 28. These were both thought to be whaling vessels trying to avoid identification by not showing navigation lights as required by international maritime law.

On May 31 the captain of the same yacht, Brad DeLanga, reported: "Saw a large pod of whales near the surface. In the middle of the pod there was a yellow floating buoy. When we approached the whales they all submerged, except the one near the buoy. It appeared to be attached to the buoy."

Mr DeLanga believed the whale was still alive, but buoys are traditionally used by catcher boats that have harpooned them until the much slower and larger factory ships arrive.

Sperm whales normally remain floating even when dead because of the quantity of oil and blubber they contain.

The illegal whaling, probably by at least two catcher boats servicing a factory vessel, is taking place as Japan attempts to get the ban on the international trade in whale meat lifted. The 135 countries which are parties to the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) are meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Among the proposals sponsored by Japan is one to get some species of whale moved from the banned list so that limited trade can take place. Japan currently catches minke whales in a "scientific programme" in the Antarctic and Pacific and sells the meat in the Tokyo fish markets.

DNA testing of whale meat from these Japanese markets, also reported yesterday by New Zealand scientists, reveals that other species of whale are being sold, notably the protected humpback, fin and Bryde's whale.

Chris Stroud, WDCS campaigns director, said: "From initial reports this seems to be a big and well planned operation. It appears that moves to open up commercial trade in whale meat at the Cites meeting could be stimulating the pirates to start their trade early."

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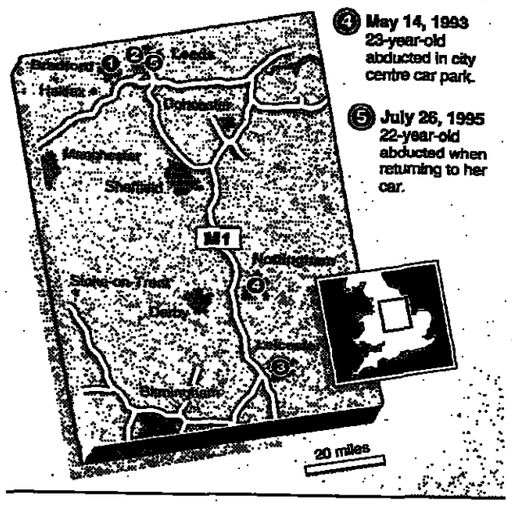
Car park attacker 'may strike again soon'

Rapist attacks linked

1. Dec 3, 1982 30-year-old abducted while parking her car, taken to a secluded location near city's airport and raped.
2. Jan 3, 1983 26-year-old abducted while parking her car in casualty car park at Leeds General Infirmary.
3. May 10, 1984 20-year-old abducted at knife-point parking her car in city centre.

9 year gap before next known crime

4. May 14, 1993 23-year-old abducted in city centre car park.
5. July 26, 1995 22-year-old abducted when returning to her car.



National hunt launched for serial rapist

Assistant chief constable Lloyd Clarke by the canal where a victim was dumped tied and hooded PHOTOGRAPH: MATTHEW POVER

Martin Wainwright

A SADISTIC rapist who superglued one victim's eyelids and threw another bound and hooded into a canal was the target yesterday of three police forces in the biggest national appeal since the Michael Sams kidnap and murder inquiry.

Every officer in the country is to see a video of details amassed in the hunt for a middle-aged man who has struck five times in 13 years in cities linked by the M1.

Detectives led by the assistant chief constable of West Yorkshire, Lloyd Clarke, have been told that Operation Lynx, investigating vicious attacks after kidnappings from cars in evenings or afternoons in city centre car parks, has "a duty to succeed — a duty to the victims and to all women."

They were dealing with someone cruel and sadistic, said Mr Clarke, issuing an information pack aimed at triggering recognition among friends, relatives or colleagues, or the man's partner or former wife, whom he repeatedly mentioned during the attacks.

Officers in West Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire have been frustrated by the missing piece in a jigsaw of clues drawn from victims' evidence, dates of attacks and the man's use of credit cards stolen from the women. It is two years since the last assault, and detectives are concerned that he may strike again soon.

Detective Superintendent Ash Parfrement, head of the Nottinghamshire section of the inquiry, said: "We want everyone to take a look at what we know about him and ask: is this someone I know?"

Mr Clarke described the man as white, aged at least 35, about 5ft 8in tall, of medium build, with stubble and brown or dirty blond hair at neck or collar length. He spoke with a Scottish accent, repeating the words "lass", "lassie" and "do you hear me?"

Police have conclusively linked the five incidents, the first in Bradford in December 1982 when a woman aged 30 was abducted at 9.30pm while parking behind St George's Hall. She was taken in her car to a country lane near Leeds-Bradford airport, raped and later abandoned on a garage forecourt in Leeds when the car broke down. In Leeds the following month, a 26-year-old was kidnapped at 10pm from the general infirmary's casualty car park and raped in another country lane.

In the most vicious episode, the victim was tied, hooded and pushed into the Leeds-Liverpool canal and her car left burning near the city centre. Speaking anonymously on BBC1's Crimewatch UK last night, the woman said that when she managed to look out from the cloth bag over her head "he was still standing watching me struggle in the water".

There was an abduction and rape in Leicester in May 1984 before a long gap until May 1993, when a 23-year-old was kidnapped in Nottingham, raped and forced into the boot of her car. The latest assault was in a Leeds car park in July 1995, where a 22-year-old was sexually assaulted and cut on the hand after fighting off the man's attempts at rape.

Each victim was initially told at knifepoint that the man only wanted her car. In each case he had problems with the gears while driving.

Mr Clarke issued a list of purchases made with the women's credit cards which could prompt connections. "Between December 1982 and January 1983, cards were used to buy a Parker Falcon pen with a distinctive nib like Concorde's nose, a game called Scramble and a Chaos sweatshirt and skirt in Leeds," he said. He appealed for help from the recipients of such gifts.

An artist's impression of the man sought by police

Ministers take control of hospital planning

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

MINISTERS yesterday seized control of hospital planning and declared that some schemes would be shelved in order to start building others over the next 18 months.

The return to Whitehall direction of hospital development marks not only an attempt to kick-start the troubled private finance initiative (PFI), but also a clear shift towards a national strategy for change in health care.

Under the Conservatives, NHS trusts were encouraged to draw up their own PFI deals for expanding or renewing hospitals. The role of government was limited to vetting and rubber-stamping deals, irrespective of their relative merits.

No big PFI scheme got off the ground, however, and the hospital building programme in effect came to a halt as government capital funding — the alternative route — was slashed by almost a quarter.

Alan Milburn, the Health Minister, yesterday told an invited audience of contractors, bankers, health managers and union leaders that Labour aimed to be building hospitals within months.

Two PFI schemes, in Norwich and Dartford, Kent, would start as soon as royal assent was received for the bill being rushed through Parliament to clarify trusts' power to sign deals with the private sector.

Some 35 other becalmed PFI schemes, excluding those in London which were under a separate review of the capital's health care needs, would be assessed by the Department of Health and some put on a fast track, but the others halted.

The schemes would be evaluated against three criteria: how far negotiations had progressed; how suited they were to the PFI approach; and, the "key driver", how much they were needed in local and national contexts. Evaluation results would be published by the end of this month.

Schemes selected for the go-ahead would be set fixed timetables, requiring building to start within 18 months, and would be cancelled if they fell behind or if planned costs started to exceed budget.

Shelved schemes would return to the start of the planning process, competing either again for PFI approval or for government capital. "Being brutal, there are some people in this room who at the end of the process will be left disappointed," the minister said.

Central control of the development programme is no temporary expedient, however, as in future all hospital schemes — whether PFI or public-funded — will be assessed and prioritised by an NHS executive committee.

> 'Being brutal, there are some people who will be left disappointed'

Philip Hunt, director of the NHS Confederation, which represents trusts and health authorities, welcomed the move.

He said: "It looks as if we are getting some national, strategic direction, which is much needed if we are going to modernise the health service."

Mr Milburn also announced that the Government would not oppose the privatisation of support services within PFI deals, though clinical services would be protected and officials were working on a definition of the dividing line.

● One in two NHS managers thinks patients should pay towards some hospital services, a survey today indicates.

Forty per cent think there should be a contribution towards the treatment of self-inflicted injuries.

The leadership challenge

Some people care about the company they keep

Racial equality in Britain is good for business

Good for all our communities

Good for the nation

Much has been accomplished since the Race Relations Act was passed in 1976. Yet racial discrimination remains an unacceptable fact of life in Britain.

We want an end to this waste of talent. As leaders in Britain's private, public and voluntary sectors we will use our power and influence to end racial discrimination and see our diverse society realise its full potential.

Real change will be achieved by the efforts of leaders throughout our society. That is why we accept the Leadership Challenge and are inviting others to do the same.

Association of British Insurers	Mark Boleat, Director-General
Association of Chief Officers of Probation	John Hicks, Chairman
Association of University Teachers	David Triesman, General Secretary
Bank of England	Eddie George, Governor
Barkers Human Resources Advertising Ltd	Steve Halford, Managing Director
Benefits Agency	Peter Mathison, Chief Executive
British Broadcasting Corporation	John Birt, Director-General
British Medical Association	Dr Jane Richards, Chairman, Representative Body
British Phonographic Industry	John Preston, Chairman
British Telecommunications plc	Sir Peter Bonfield, CBE FEng, Chief Executive
British Youth Council	Gabriella Civico, Chair
Business In The Community and Race For Opportunity	Julia Cleverdon, Chief Executive, BITC
Caparo Group Limited	The Lord Paul, Chairman
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Engineering Employers' Federation	Graham R. Mackenzie, OBE FEng, Director-General
English Sports Council	Derek Casey, Chief Executive
Financial Times	Robin Pauley, Managing Editor
Federation of Recruitment & Employment Services	Christine Little, Chief Executive
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Further Education Development Agency	Stephen Crowne, Chief Executive
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National Council for Voluntary Youth Services	Susanne Rauprich, Chief Executive
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NHS Executive	Alan Langlands, Chief Executive
The Prince's Trust	Tom Shebbeare, Executive Director
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Teacher Training Agency	Anthea Millett, Chief Executive
TEC National Council	Sir Garry Johnson, Chairman
Trades Union Congress	John Monks, General Secretary

Prelude to EU summit

Diplomacy seeks to avert paralysis

- Frantic hunt for compromise on euro ahead of Amsterdam
- Workers in France demand link between single currency and jobs
- Jospin to overturn 'Fortress Europe' policies of predecessor

Stephen Bates in Strasbourg and Julie Wolf in Brussels

EUROPE'S leaders began a frantic round of negotiations yesterday to rescue an agreement on rules for the single currency in time to prevent it disrupting next week's Amsterdam summit.

Intense diplomatic activity followed the new French government's demand for a reordering of the stability pact, which is intended to regulate member states' conduct of their economic policies once the euro has been adopted.

If the pact is not endorsed as planned the inter-governmental treaty reforming the European Union, which is also due to be signed, may have to be delayed, deepening Europe's apparent paralysis.

Germany has demanded strict adherence to the previously agreed rules, which prescribe heavy fines for member states if they run up excessive budget deficits. The Socialist government in France now wants to relax this so that job creation and growth can be included.

Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, is to meet both President Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin, France's new prime minister, in Paris tomorrow in an attempt to sell them a compromise which would allow the French to agree the stability pact.

Mr Santer said in Strasbourg last night: "I am sure the treaty will be signed."

Any compromise is likely to be based on emphasising the need to co-ordinate national economic policies and a resolution fleshing out the commitments to job creation made in the Maastricht treaty six years ago.

It has emerged that the German finance minister, Theo Waigel, threatened the French at Monday's meeting of economics ministers in Luxembourg that if they refused to adhere to the existing terms of the pact there would be no deal at Amsterdam.

That would be a political disaster for the EU. While it may not come to that the EU leaders began talking for the first time yesterday about a fall-back position.

It would allow limited postponement an agreement on the stability pact until the Jospin government presents its economic plans to the national assembly on June 19, after the summit, and possibly postponement of the signing of the treaty until later in the month as well.

In Paris, President Chirac met Wim Kok, the Dutch prime minister and host of next week's summit, while in Strasbourg the EU's declining band of rightwing Christian Democrat leaders, led by Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, met to try to salvage their strategy for the euro.

Denis Staunton in Berlin adds: Bonn indicated yesterday that it is prepared to abandon its opposition to incorporating a jobs chapter in the revised Maastricht treaty. The foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, suggested that it would not oppose the chapter as long as it did not involve a job-creation programme which needed EU funding.

The opposition Social Democrats threatened yesterday to use their majority in parliament to block ratification of the new treaty unless it included a jobs chapter.

Members of the ruling Christian Democrats indicated their willingness to drop opposition to the chapter.

Unions hold Jospin to jobs pledge

Paul Webster in Paris

ABOUT 40,000 trade union demonstrators marched through Paris yesterday to increase pressure on the Socialist-led government to refuse the introduction of a single European currency until it is accompanied by vigorous measures to create jobs.

Within hours of the demonstration ending, Jacques Chirac, the Gaullist president, said the leftwing government was right to demand a stronger social content to the single currency.

After meeting the Dutch prime minister, Wim Kok, Mr Chirac said he wanted the coming European Union summit in Amsterdam to approve the stability pact on budget restrictions but also agree on social and economic policies, "on which the French government has rightly placed the accent".

Mr Chirac's reinforcement of a rethink on the single currency will be seen as a crack in the Paris-Bonn axis which set up the stability pact in Dublin last year.

Yesterday's march was a strong warning that French unions will not accept budget austerity and expect the new prime minister, Lionel Jospin, to stick to his campaign promises to increase spending on job creation.

Since the autumn of 1995, when much of the country was paralysed by public sector strikes against welfare cuts, the unions have been more aggressive and united than at any time in recent years and they show no signs of lessening their protests because of the leftwing parliamentary victory.

Anti-EMU banners were carried by leaders of the Communist-led CGT, which has been encouraged by the Communist Party and the Citizens' Movement — both members of the government coalition — to press for the estimated £5 billion it will need to meet its job creation promises, even if this undermines the Euro deadline.

Even though the left now has a clear majority in the national assembly, Mr Jospin is expected to act by decree to fulfil promises on other economic questions, including a big increase in the minimum wage.

During the election campaign, he promised to help finance 700,000 jobs for young people, half of them in the public sector and the rest in private industry. He will outline his methods on June 19 in a general policy speech to parliament, but can expect an upsurge in trade union protests if he goes back on his promises.

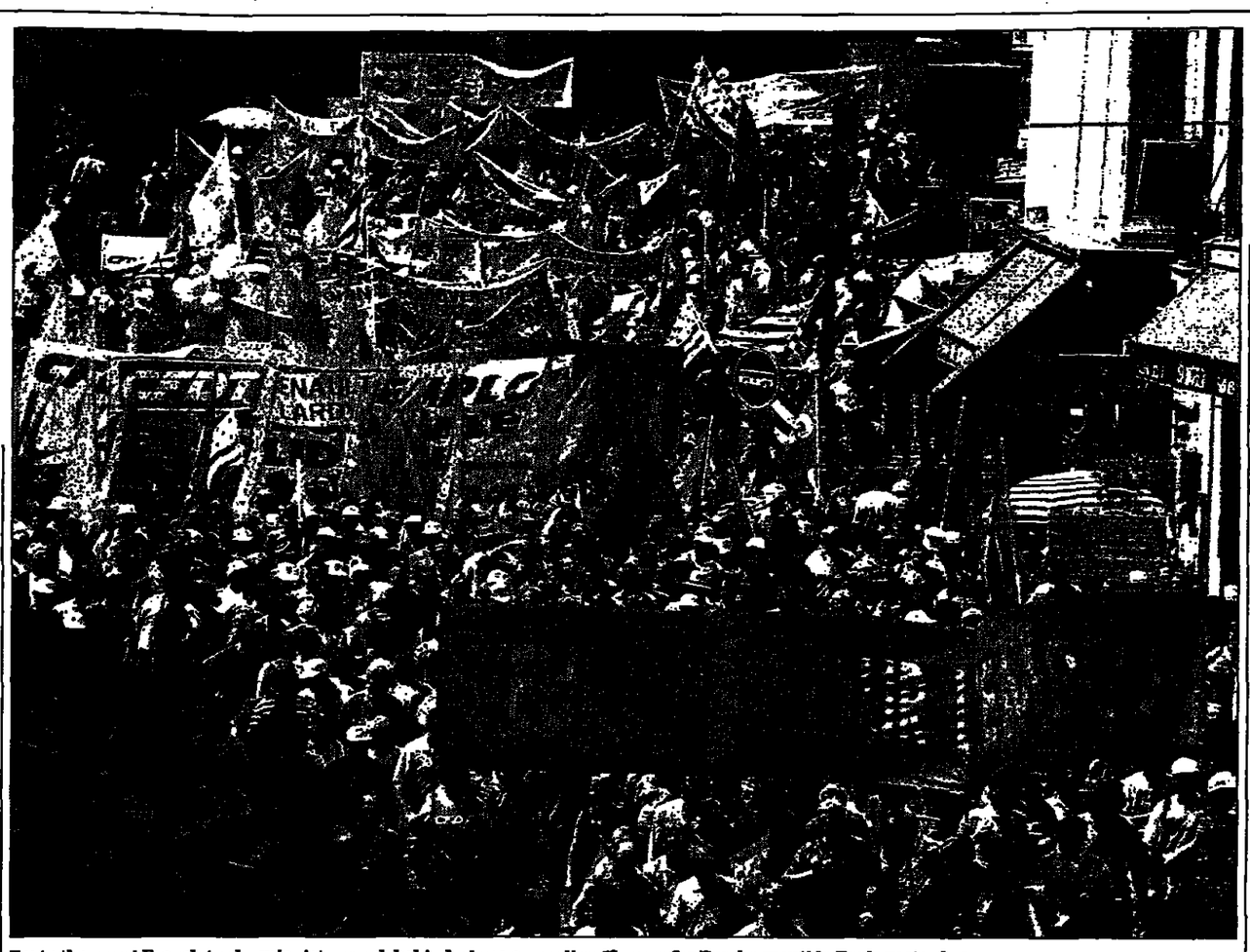
Between top-level talks this week, he will meet leaders of all the big trade unions separately to hear their views on job creation, monetary union and an end to a wage freeze in the public sector. The seven public sector unions have not drawn up a joint policy but some want compensation for the freeze introduced in autumn 1995.

By the time he meets the unions, Mr Jospin will know whether Tony Blair is ready to support the French stance on a single currency and defy Chancellor Helmut Kohl's demands to stick to the stability pact on budget restrictions.

Opposition to the French government's plans on the single currency has been seriously weakened by a revolt in the Gaullist RPR since the disastrous snap election last week, when the right lost more than 200 seats. President Chirac sacked his prime minister, Alain Juppé, but now faces a challenge from the former labour minister and anti-Maastricht campaigner Philippe Séguin, who was elected the RPR parliamentary leader yesterday.

Although Mr Séguin has dropped his outright rejection of Maastricht, his socially-oriented policy resembles the government's, making it even more difficult for Mr Chirac to follow Mr Kohl's line on the single currency.

Renault boss climbs down, page 12



Forty thousand French trade unionists march behind a banner reading 'Europe for Employment' in Paris yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: PASCAL ROSSIGNOL

Paris reverses rightwing stand on immigration

Paul Webster in Paris

FORTY thousand illegal immigrants and political refugees are to get resident permits as the new Socialist-led government moves to overturn anti-immigration measures taken by the Gaullist former interior minister Jean-Louis Debré.

The move runs contrary to the "Fortress Europe" mentality underlying the Maastricht project rejected by the French electorate last month. In its sharp contrast to attitudes to immigration in Germany and Britain, this is an indication of new thinking which will have to be absorbed by other European governments.

The prime minister, Lionel Jospin, announced the changes to Ababacar Diop, leader of a protest march by *sans-papiers*, mostly Africans who have been refused rights because of official obstruction. The meeting between Mr Jospin and Mr Diop ended a 15-month struggle that included last August's occupation of the Saint Bernard Church in Paris, when celebrities such as actress Emmanuelle Béart backed the hunger strikers.

Mr Jospin's decision was a public rejection of racist National Front doctrines which pushed the previous conservative government to seek electoral popularity by harassing immigrants, many of whom had settled in France years ago.

Riot police were used to break up their protests, including the occupation of Saint Bernard.

An order has been given to the Parisian and provincial authorities to accelerate the granting of residence papers to families and individuals which comply with one of six conditions. The conditions will favour families already well integrated into the French way of life who have expressed the wish to be naturalised.

Partners of French people or legal immigrants and parents of children born in France were also high on the list for emergency registration. Other categories include political refugees in danger if they were returned to their countries of origin, foreigners receiving costly medical treatment, and students.

Officials estimated that the number of beneficiaries would be between 20,000 and 40,000. They said the measures were not intended to repeat the generalised regularisation of illegal immigrants that took place in 1982.

> The French people had understood that immigrants wanted to settle

About 132,000 settlers were given residence papers by a previous Socialist government.

An official said that each case would be examined individually as part of a transitional initiative until legislation was reformed during a parliamentary debate in the autumn.

He confirmed that a mediator would be appointed to sort out contested cases.

Mr Diop said the decision was an act of commonsense but the *sans-papiers* owed their victory to the support of French people who had at last understood that immigrants really wanted to settle.

One of the protesters' negotiators, Stéphane Hessel, said the decision was the least that could be done by politicians who had stood by powerless during the "ridiculous actions of Mr Debré".

Czech leader wins key vote but crisis mounts

Ian Traynor in Prague

THE Czech prime minister, Vaclav Klaus, promised more belt-tightening last night after surviving a vote of confidence in his year-old government by the slimmest of margins.

Mr Klaus won the vote by 101-99 in a lower house session attended by all 200 MPs. He said he realised the "seriousness of the situation" and vowed to "take measures that will be quite unpopular" in an attempt to reverse a worsening economic crisis.

He agreed to the confidence vote after weeks of paralysis in his three-party coalition government and amid a rapidly deteriorating economic situation that brought a 10 per cent devaluation of the national currency.

Despite winning the vote by securing the support of a single independent MP, Mr Klaus still faces a credibility crisis and senior politicians said last night's respite would be short lived.

"The chances of this government surviving long are less than spectacular," a key coalition politician said.

In addition to the worsening economic crisis, which led him to announce £350 million of further spending cuts yesterday — a bigger austerity drive was announced two months ago — Mr Klaus faces an incipient rebellion in his party and by his two coalition partners.

The opposition social democrats, led by Milos Zeman, are running comfortably ahead of Mr Klaus's rightwing Civic Democratic Party in the polls. The prime minister has to contend also with discreet opposition from the popular president, Vaclav Havel.

Regional leaders in Mr Klaus's party believe the strong-minded prime minister has become a liability and that they would have a better chance of retaining power with aq new leader.

Senior coalition members warned that the political infighting could trigger a bigger economic and currency crisis by hindering reform efforts.

Mr Klaus admitted that he had contributed to the worsening political and economic climate since winning a second term a year ago.

"The government knows this unstable situation must not continue," he told parliament. "It is necessary to break this vicious circle when economic problems breed political instability and public concern and this instability and fear bring about more economic problems."

Moscow caught in middle as Caucasian foes clash

David Hearst in Moscow

PEACE talks between Georgia and the breakaway state of Abkhazia were close to collapse last night, just weeks before the mandate of the Russian peacekeeping forces separating the two sides is due to expire. It is feared that a second and bloodier round of fighting could break out in the former Black Sea resort.

Four years ago Russian-backed Abkhaz fighters defeated Georgian forces, leaving 10,000 people dead, and more than 350,000 refugees returned to Georgia.

The unrecognised president of Abkhazia, Vladislav Ardzinba, left Moscow empty-handed yesterday, having pleaded with the Russians to keep 2,500 paratroopers in place on the volatile frontier zone by the Inguri river.

One of the Russian mediators at the talks, Gennady Ilishev, said: "We have almost reached a cul-de-sac in the negotiations, because neither side is willing to compromise. They don't even want to compromise."

Officially Russia's mandate expires on July 31, but Mr Ilishev said the troops might be pulled out earlier if the security situation deteriorated.

A week of belligerent statements by the two sides followed a resolution by the Georgian parliament in Tbilisi calling for the Russian force's withdrawal if Moscow refuses to guarantee the security of Georgian refugees returning to their looted homes.

Both sides are rattling their sabres. The Georgian leader, Eduard Shevardnadze, said last month it would be "suicide" for 100,000 Abkhazians to take on Georgia's "rebuilt" armed forces.

His relationship with Moscow further deteriorated on Monday, when he claimed that Georgia should have received a share of the former Soviet Black Sea fleet in the settlement Russia reached with Ukraine 10 days ago.

The Abkhazians, for their part, have been threatening to

bolster their forces with the Chechen battalion under the banner of the so-called Confederation of Peoples of the Caucausus, which played a significant part in the defeat of Georgian forces four years ago.

The president of the confederation, Yusup Soslambekov, said yesterday that they were ready to send "volunteers" into Abkhazia if the Russians pulled out. He said there was no shortage of fighters willing to come to Abkhazia's defence.

Russia can close the land border at the coast, but it cannot seal the mountainous border between Abkhazia and the volatile states in the north Caucausus.

The crisis is the first in the Caucausus since the ignominious defeat of Russian forces in Chechenia, and it has been heavily influenced by it. At first Mr Shevardnadze hoped to use Russia's refusal to acquiesce to Chechenia's claims of independence as a model for his refusal to consider Abkhazia as anything more than an autonomous region of Georgia, the region's status before Georgian forces were ousted.

But Russia's realpolitik and its recently negotiated peace treaty with the Chechen president, Aslan Maskhadov, proved a poisoned chalice for Mr Shevardnadze. After the Russian deal with the Chechens the Abkhazians demanded Georgia accept the consequences of military defeat and start negotiating.

The talks broke down yesterday over one article of a Russian document paving the way for a general peace treaty. The article dealt with Abkhazia's political status.

The Abkhazians are offering talks on a confederation in which their statelet and Georgia would appear as equal sovereign partners. It will only consider the mass return of Georgian refugees when Tbilisi recognises its de facto independence.

The Georgians insist on a unitary state, and are prepared to talk only about degrees of autonomy for Abkhazia. It says the refugees must be allowed to return before a settlement can be made.

Passions spilled over yesterday in a Russian parliamentary public hearing at which the representatives of Georgian refugees heckled and barracked Russian and Abkhaz speakers, calling them "bandits".

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	6001-9000	13.25%
	9001-12000	13.25%
	12001-15000	12.50%
Dated 26/04/95 – 27/01/97	500-2000	16.75%
	2001-5000	14.75%
	5001-15000	12.75%
Dated 28/01/97 – 07/05/97	500-3000	16.75%
	3001-6000	14.75%
	6001-9000	12.75%
	9001-12000	12.75%
	12001-15000	12.00%

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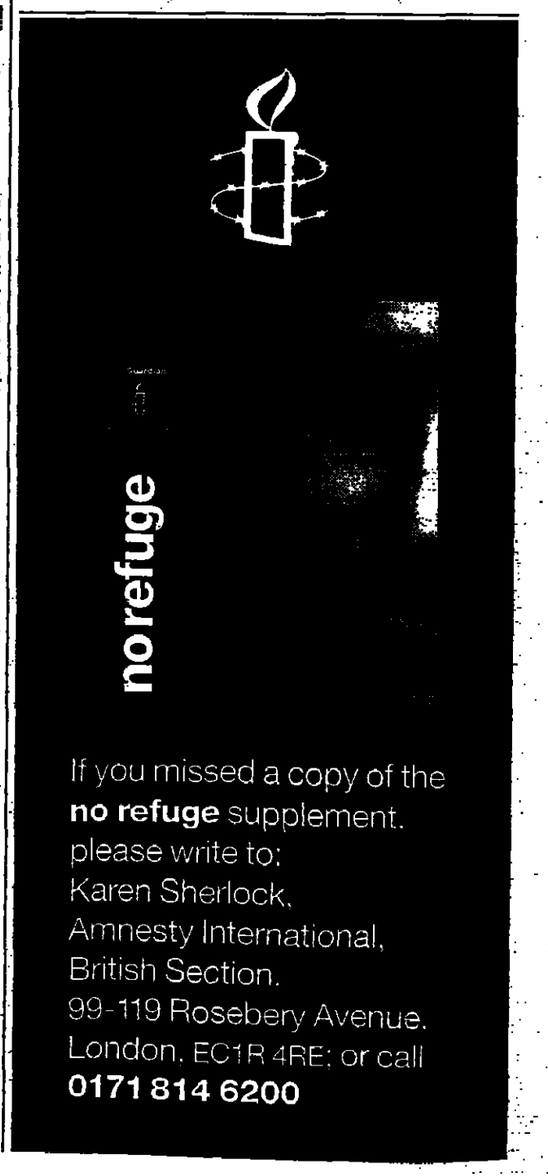


If you missed a copy of the **no refuge** supplement, please write to: Karen Sherlock, Amnesty International, British Section, 99-119 Rosebery Avenue, London, EC1R 4RE; or call 0171 814 6200

هكذا من الاصل

King Hassan repeats the Moroccan claim that the Polisario Front is an Algerian creation in a cartoon (top) about the dispute. Once a credible fighting force (above), the movement now has no military muscle

Sands shift in a forgotten war

Efforts are under way to revive plans for a referendum on the fate of Western Sahara. UN officials have grown impatient with the former Spanish colony's protracted dispute

Ian Black examines the desert impasse

UNITED NATIONS efforts to end one of the world's most intractable territorial disputes, over the Western Sahara, have been moved to London today in the hope that the United States' toughest diplomatic operator can cajole the parties into a deal.

James Baker, the former secretary of state, meets the foreign ministers of Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania and the Polisario Front for two days of "proximity talks" to revive the long-dormant plans for a referendum on the former Spanish colony.

Mr Baker — now the UN special envoy on the Western Sahara issue — will explore how to end the impasse over giving Sahrawis a choice between independence and integration into Morocco.

Public pressure will be negligible: Moroccans of all political hues back King Hassan in demanding sovereignty over the barren but phosphate-rich territory, while Polisario is a one-party, exiled liberation movement with no military muscle and little international support.

Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general, is impatient with the protracted dispute, although no blood has been shed since a ceasefire came into effect in 1991 and a UN mission for the referendum, Minurso, was set up.

But the conflict remains a source of regional instability while the Sahrawis live off international aid and in misery in south-western Algeria, along with a few hundred Moroccan prisoners kept as bargaining chips.

Mr Baker's brief is to secure agreement on who should be eligible to vote in a referendum on the desert's future: just the 74,000 people included in the last Spanish census — held a year before the Moroccan takeover in 1975 — as favoured by Polisario, or the additional 120,000 Morocco says are of Saharan origin.

Despite Minurso's conciliation efforts, the sides have been unable to agree on procedures for identifying potential voters. The process was suspended a year ago, to suspicion that neither side really wanted to go ahead.

Although no blood has been shed since a ceasefire took effect in 1991, the conflict remains a source of regional instability

"Polisario has to give up its absolute insistence on independence," a Western diplomat said yesterday. And on the Moroccan side they will have to accept that Polisario will need a level of autonomy beyond what the Moroccans currently think is acceptable."

Polisario insists that the referendum must go ahead. "The only solution is to respect the principle of self determination," said the movement's UN representative, Bukhari Ahmed.

"This is a problem of decolonisation. Moroccan talk of a forgotten war is just intended to spread confusion in the international community."

Hope of a settlement rose last winter when King Hassan made a speech that was conciliatory towards Polisario, although he indicated that Saharan independence would not be discussed.

Mr Baker, who cobbled together the Gulf war coalition against Iraq and bulldozed reluctant Arabs and Israelis to the negotiating table afterwards, described the Sahara situation as "very tough but not hopeless" after visiting the region in April.

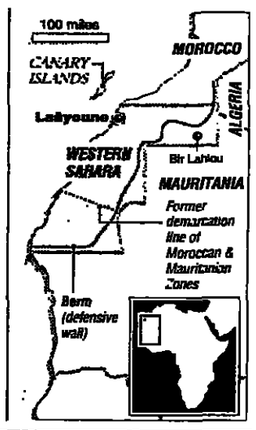
Polisario's low morale and lack of support may be his best card: Algeria is preoccupied with its vicious internal war, while Morocco has won hearts and minds in the Sahara by freeing prisoners, investing in infrastructure and buying off tribal elders.

And the international environment has changed with the end of the cold war, the appearance of "moderation" on Morocco's part, and a loss of interest by the 70 countries which still recognise the ghostly "Saharan Arab Democratic Republic" and regional bodies like the Organisation of African Unity.

Mr Annan has made it clear that the UN's patience is not indefinite, and Mr Baker — more used to wielding sticks than offering carrots — will repeat the point.

Minurso's mandate has been extended until September and the parties are being urged to "demonstrate the political will to overcome the existing stalemate and find an acceptable solution".

Beyond that the future is unclear.



Death comes with a smile and a song

Mark Tran in New York

JAZZ fans with a taste for the macabre can now buy a compact disc released by Jack Kevorkian, nicknamed "Dr Death" because of his vocal advocacy of assisted suicide.

The jazz CD, called Kevorkian Suite: A Very Still Life, contains dirge-like instrumentals — most of them original compositions.

Titles include Whispering, Came Violets, In Strange Loops, August To Amber and Fuguetta Caffeine. They feature Dr Kevorkian playing flute and organ accompanied by the Morpheus Quartet.

The verdict from one reviewer was "generally listenable, but no one is going to accuse Dr Death of a killer performance".

A sticker on the CD says $4 from every disc sold will go towards the building of Dr Kevorkian's first "patholysis" clinic, which he describes as a "safe haven for doctor-assisted suicide". He hopes to supervise a chain of such safe havens across the United States.

Having helped at least 40 people commit suicide, Dr Kevorkian spends considerable amounts of time in the courts and is on trial this week in Michigan for allegedly helping a woman with multiple sclerosis kill herself last August.

But in between assisting suicides and his courtroom appearances, he has found time not only to compose jazz scores but to record a CD. His company, Lucid Subjazz, has released 5,000 copies of A Very Still Life, and plans a wider release.

"Bet you never knew that the man they call Dr Death is a huge fan of Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, or that the tune Celery Stalks At Midnight can always be counted on to make me smile," Dr Kevorkian writes on the liner notes.

"The prosecutors would be justified in coming after my musical efforts with any of these men, but I think you may find echoes of most of my musical heroes in these works."

Dr Kevorkian wrote 11 of the 12 tracks. "The thing I hope the world will say about me years from now is that I was a physician who helped relieve human suffering," he says on the CD.

"Music has often soothed me — and I hope these works will make you smile."

Mexican electorate prepares to navigate uncharted waters

A defeat for the ruling party in the battle for congress on July 6 would have a profound impact on the political landscape, writes **Phil Gunson** in Mexico City

THE world's most durable political system is facing an uncertain future as the countdown begins to Mexico's July 6 elections.

The country's political landscape could be fundamentally altered by a strong opposition showing in the battle for congress.

"The possible loss of [the government] majority in the chamber of deputies would have repercussions across the length and breadth of the political system," says Manuel Camacho, formerly a leading member of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The PRI has governed the country under three different names since 1929 and has never lost control of congress.

Traditionally, the Mexican parliament has merely rubber-stamped the decisions of the presidency, and despite the growing strength of the opposition in recent years no one knows how, or if, the system will function if the government fails to retain a majority in the 500-seat lower house.

"The PRI is worried that without control of congress the system would begin to fall apart," says José Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti, a former citizen member of the electoral authority (IFE).

In the past, such concern was fairly easily resolved by a combination of fraud, threats and vote-buying. But a series of electoral reforms, a less docile electorate and increasing attention from the international community have reduced, but not removed, the threat of a rigged result.

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who is seeking the Mexican City mayoralty for the leftwing Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and currently holds a substantial lead in the polls, said recently that a fraud would "cancel ... this form of decision-making.

"I do not believe this will happen, but this is the real issue in this election."

A recent report by the independent Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) warns that with "growing expectations of victory by the opposition, the risks increase that radical groups might react violently if these expectations are not fulfilled."

Neither the Chiapas-based Zapatistas nor the more radical guerrillas of the Popular Revolutionary Army plan to disrupt the vote. But a fraud would undoubtedly heighten the appeal of armed struggle.

In addition to 500 congressional seats, a third of the senate, five of the 31 state governorships and — for the first time in more than 60 years — control of the capital are to be voted on next month.

But it is the fate of the lower house — which controls the budget — that is causing the greatest loss of sleep in government circles.

Under the country's complicated electoral rules, which combine direct voting with a system of proportional representation, the PRI could keep its overall majority with a little over 42 per cent of the vote.

Recent polls suggest that it may be two or three points short of that target. The tightness of the contest means, according to the WOLA report, that even "relatively small problems in the election process, slight manipulations, and minor fraud" could significantly alter the result.

Citizen groups warn that in rural areas in particular, where the PRD and the conservative National Action Party (PAN), the main opposition party, have difficulty monitoring all the polling stations, fraud could take place.

And despite improvements, the electoral playing field is still far from level. The PRI has a huge campaign spending advantage, and is also accused of continuing to resort to the time-honoured practice of using government funds for electoral purposes.

Television coverage continues to be slanted in favour of the government, and a number of opposition radio commentators have been silenced or restricted in recent weeks, allegedly on orders from the interior ministry.

With the result too close to call, newspaper columns are full of minute analyses of the possible permutations.

What no one can say with certainty is whether a three-cornered congress, in which no single party commands a majority, would result in legislative paralysis.

One plausible scenario is a series of ad hoc alliances: the PRI joining forces with the PAN on some issues and the PRD on others, while in certain circumstances the opposition parties, normally mutually hostile, combine to defeat the PRI.

One way or the other, Mexicans may be entering unknown political territory less than four weeks from today.

Ruling on same sex harassment

Martin Walker in Washington

AFTER claims by an oil worker that he was threatened with rape by his foreman and two fellow workers on an offshore rig in the Gulf of Mexico, the US supreme court is to resolve the tangled issue of whether gay sexual harassment exists in law.

Legal opinion has been sharply divided. Joseph Oncale's case against his employers, Sundowner Offshore Services, was dismissed last year by the federal court and the court of appeals in New Orleans, which ruled that there could only be sexual harassment between the sexes.

But in a separate case a St Louis court ruled last year that gender was immaterial in sexual harassment. And courts in Cincinnati and Richmond have complicated matters further by ruling that sexual harassment laws can apply when a heterosexual man is threatened with "a hostile work environment" by homosexuals.

The resulting confusion has in effect forced the supreme court to intervene and make a definitive ruling.

The Clinton administration has urged the supreme court to uphold a 1981 internal ruling by the Equal Opportunities Commission that "the victim does not have to be of the opposite sex from the harasser".

Beatrice Dohrn, legal director of the Lambda Legal Defence Fund, a prominent gay rights group, said the principle was clear: sexual harassment should be defined by the behaviour involved, and not by the sex or sexual orientation of the individuals. Mr Oncale's case is seen as almost tailor-made for the gay rights lobby to win its point.

The laws against sexual harassment require employers to ensure that the workplace is not "a hostile environment marked by intimidation, ridicule and insult".

Mr Oncale, who was on the Sundowner rig for months at a time, was unable to escape the organised harassment by his foreman and two fellow workers. He claims that they grabbed him, exposed themselves to him and threatened him with homosexual rape.

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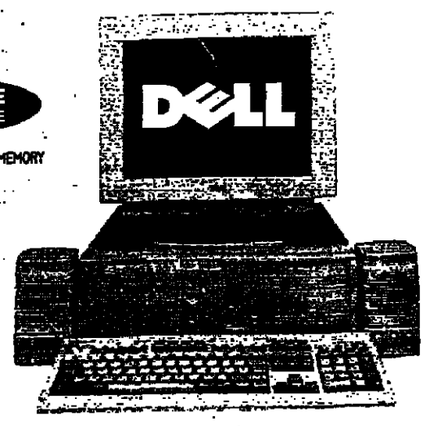

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The Tories cannot unite

The party has no idea what it stands for anymore

OFFERED the chance to unite behind a new leader of their party, Conservative MPs last night comprehensively spurned it. Yesterday's first ballot in the Tory leadership contest revealed a party laid bare by faction and division, in which all five candidates scored well but in which not even the best candidate could command 30 per cent of the vote. It is a result which instead of providing a lifeline to the humiliated Tory Party simply compounds all of its problems. Next week, the party must try to answer the same question in a second ballot, but with little likelihood of greater success. Tory MPs could not have made a greater mess of it if they had tried.

The most important conclusion from last night's first round is that Kenneth Clarke cannot win. Mr Clarke is the best man to lead the Tory Party, but the Tory Party has shown that it neither wants him nor wants him enough. Even in yesterday's Guardian/ICM poll of Tory voters (a rare breed these days), Mr Clarke only won a third of support. A survey of Tory activists showed him doing a little better, though by no means securing a majority. And yesterday's poll of MPs confirmed the depressing truth. The pre-eminent Conservative politician of the age, and the one who enjoys most support among the voters, is simply not sufficiently trusted by the right-wing rump who held the future of the party in their hands yesterday — and dropped it.

None of the three Thatcherite candidates for the succession did as badly as they had feared. But nor did any of them do as well as they had hoped either. The result is a stand-off on the right of the party. John Redwood, Peter Lilley and Michael Howard are competitors for the same constituency of support, and they must now try to resolve which of them plausibly goes forward into the second and subsequent ballots as the standard bearer of the Thatcher inheritence. The early signs last night were that the evenness of the outcome between the three men will not make this an easy task.

Even so, the real question after yesterday's ballot is whether William Hague, who finished in a good second place with 41 votes behind Mr Clarke's disappointing 49, can unite the right, or whether some other candidate, as yet unthought of, can now declare for the second round and achieve that aim too. The most probable of these two options is that Mr Hague will now gradually begin to consolidate his position, first at the expense of the three explicitly right-wing candidates, and then perhaps at the expense of Mr Clarke. Even if this does happen, which is by no means certain, it may not happen quickly. There must therefore be a flickering temptation in the bosom of Michael Heseltine that here, at last and well-nigh worthless though it may be, is his last and best chance to lead the Conservatives.

But these are all dismal options. The grim truth is that the Conservative Party has been so savaged by Tony Blair that it is not in a fit state to unite behind any leader at the moment. The party does not know what it stands for, and does not understand the tasks which now confront it. Yesterday's vote is a powerful testament to the absence of a unifying Tory project. It shows that the damage that has been done to the once-great party is even more serious than it had already appeared. The contestants move forward now to a second round, in the confident knowledge that no candidate and no set of ideas commands the support of the traumatised party.

This is an increasingly hopeless contest for a prize which now seems barely worth having.

The sad case of David Caddell

He has surpassed all expectations: Lambeth should pay up

DAVID CADDELL is an exceptional teenager. In a sane world he would be embraced by local authority leaders and his achievements celebrated as a shining example for other disadvantaged young people to follow. Against all the odds, David has survived the trauma of abuse and neglect in infancy, a shocking and shameful childhood in which he has been shunted between 60 different foster and children's homes to emerge well on his way to a career in graphic design and advertising. Two years ago he started a foundation course in art and design at Medway College in Chatham to be followed by a two-year national diploma course in graphic design. Compared to his contemporaries in care, this is an astounding performance: up to 75 per cent end up with no formal qualifications, as few as 12 per cent (compared with 68 per cent of the general population) go on to further education, and 80 per cent end up unemployed. Yet his reward is a petty, mean-minded dispute between rival local councils about who should pick up his living and college bills. Both Lambeth, where he was taken into care, and Kent, where he has been fostered, are refusing to pay the cost.

If ministers are looking for a cause they could do no better than take up the needs of the 60,000 children in care — both those in residential homes as well as with foster parents. David Caddell's experience is exceptional but there are still far too many unnecessary breakdowns in family placements: on average, children are moved five times, but the average hides even higher and even more unacceptable figures. Each move can be traumatic. The high number of moves suggest fostering services are still plagued by inadequate assessments and poor childcare planning. Ministers should initiate a debate on the future of foster care. The National Foster Care Association, in a report last month, argued that it was time foster care moved from an amateur social service appendage to a professionally-trained and properly-paid service. The 40,000 young people in foster care are increasingly older, more troubled and more traumatised, yet the foster parents looking after them are given far too little support and training — as well as payments which frequently fall below the cost of looking after the child. No wonder recruiting new foster parents is becoming increasingly difficult.

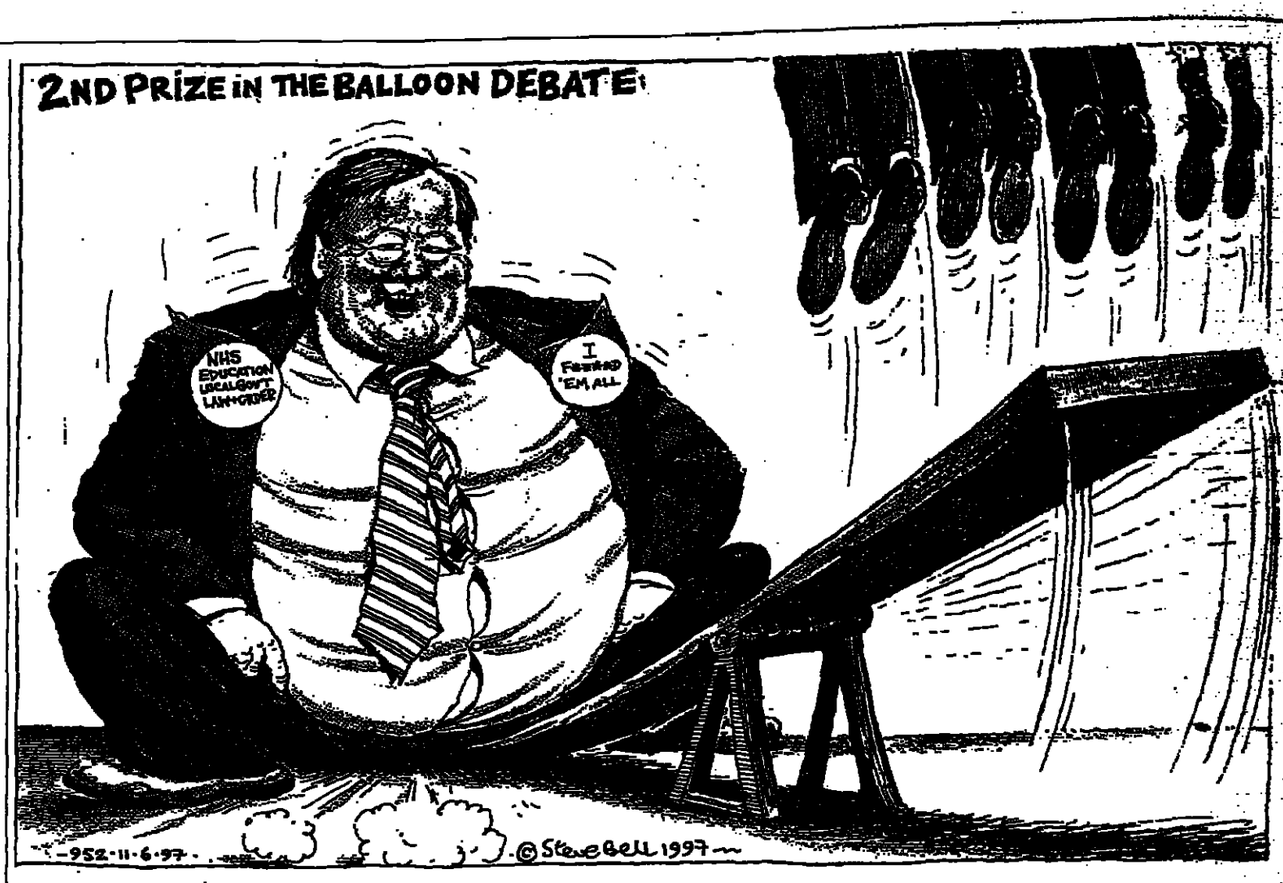
Meanwhile the only other person to emerge from the Caddell story with any credit is his foster parent in Kent for the last five years, who even paid some of his educational costs from her own pocket. David has been required to move out of her home to a one-bedroom flat in order to claim Income Support but once he turns 19 in November, he will no longer, as a full-time student, be eligible for such welfare Absurdly, the High Court this week upheld Lambeth's refusal to pay. Yet it was Lambeth that assumed parental rights. Ministers should therefore ensure that it is Lambeth that finally coughs up.

A rival Budget for Gordon Brown

His own effort is a squib compared with the mutuals' bonanza

GORDON BROWN has an unusual problem. He will be presenting his first Budget next month in competition with an unofficial one from the private sector in the form of windfall gains from the privatisation of mutual companies. The Halifax flotation alone has put £18 billion into the economy and the total to be unleashed this year will be £30 billion or more. This is well over six times what Mr Brown has to play around with. (And he's planning to take money *out* of the economy not put it back in.) The new Chancellor can hardly ignore this avalanche of money. Recent presumptions that all but 5 to 10 per cent of the bonanzas would be saved have been shattered by our ICM poll this morning. It indicates that 29 per cent of all recipients (covering 40 per cent of the population) are intending to sell all their shares and a further 11 per cent sell part. Although some 30 per cent of these will switch most of the gains into other savings, it could still leave £6 billion to £8 billion of extra spending this year. It is hardly likely that an increase in interest rates of 0.25 per cent will make any difference.

What should the Chancellor do? If natural justice had anything to do with it, he would tax the windfall gains. After all, they haven't been "earned" in any meaningful sense. They represent wealth created during over 100 years of mutuality which the present generation has decided to cash in. If Mr Brown feels obliged to raise taxes in order to reduce government borrowing, the beneficiaries of these windfall gains ought to be first in the firing line. It won't happen like that, of course, because Hell hath no fury like the wrath of middle England. But the tidal wave of cash about to hit the economy should be a warning to Mr Brown that what the economy really needs is fiscal correction not yet more higher interest rates.



Letters to the Editor

Julie Burchill on sex and crime

I WAS interested to read Duncan Campbell's report on how convicted criminals serving jail sentences in this country are not allowed to have regular, state-sponsored sex, unlike their lucky, liberated brethren in Europe (No holds — barred, G2, June 9).

Does he believe that convicted rapists should be allowed their weekly "ration" as well as burglars and terrorists? And if not, why not? And if yes, can he not understand how offensive this might be to women and rape victims?

The insane, discredited idea that men "have" to have their weekly "portion" of sex or they'll go berserk is often used to justify rape itself. Hell, why not throw in handcuffs, cocktails for two and a CD of Songs For Swinging Lovers while we're at it? Only where, oh where, did the honourable old lag dictum go: "If you can't do the time, don't do the crime"?

Personally, I can't think of anything more likely to teach a violent man what it feels like to be a victim than a bout of enforced buggery. To bring "comfort women" in order to preserve the manly pride of cons strikes me as sexist and sissy in the extreme.
Julie Burchill.
c/o Simpson Fox,
52 Shaftesbury Avenue,
London W1V 7DE.

The way to foster hope

AS someone who was financially supported by my local authority until the age of 22, I'd like to persuade Lambeth of the long-term' wisdom of investing in David Caddell (After 60 homes, foster boy faces final rejection, June 10). Berkshire's financial support for my foster family allowed me to complete a university degree and pursue a successful and hopefully useful career in journalism.

The vast majority of local authority cash spent on fostering is spent on children from broken homes for whom just completing education is an achievement. Therefore when a child shows the potential, not only to heal the problems in his or her own past but to succeed academically, surely this is worthy of support. Without Berkshire's foresight, I may have finished up as a burden on the same local authority that had the wisdom to back me then.

David Caddell's story brings home to thousands of kids in care that they can overcome difficulties and make a valuable contribution. Pay up, Lambeth, I'm sure he's worth every penny.
Phil Hendry.
BBC North West,
New Broadcasting House,
Oxford Road,
Manchester M60 1SJ.

OUR research tracking the changing circumstances of 3,000 young people leaving care reveals a significant and increasing number, 525 (or 17.5 per cent), taking further or higher education. This relatively high proportion is all the more remarkable when one considers that the majority of these young people are going through major emotional upheavals.

The research also discovered that for all 3,000, the potential public financial support necessary for them to undertake education has significantly worsened since the Children Act (1989). This includes the availability of Income Support, Community Care Grants, Social Fund availability, Leaving Care Grants, funding for accommodation, top-up financial support from social services, provision of financial grants from local authorities for education and training, and financial support during vacations.

Without a strengthening of the Children Act's requirements to provide this support these young people will be further prevented from improving their education situation and employment prospects.
(Dr) Bob Broad.
Senior Research Fellow,
De Montfort University,
Leicester LE7 9SU.

THERE is a great deal that could be done, at low or zero cost, to improve the chances of young people in care. What is needed is a complete overhaul of all public policies that affect care-leavers, including the benefits system, with the aim of ensuring that they receive a good education and more social support. Unless this happens, there is a danger that this most vulnerable group will fail to benefit from the Welfare to Work proposals and that another generation will be left with little hope.
Deryk Mead.
Chief Executive,
NCH Action for Children,
85 Highbury Park,
London N5 1UD.

THE present law gives powers, rather than duties, for local authorities to "advise, assist and befriend" children in their care.

This reflects what caring parents, able to do so, are doing. The Lambeths of this country need to take their responsibilities as parents more seriously and hopefully the legislation will quickly be amended by the Secretary of State for Health.
J M Richards.
Director,
Catholic Children's Society,
73 St Charles Square,
London W10 6EE.

Why it's good to boldly go

THE primary reason for going to Mars — as for the rest of space science — is to gain fundamental knowledge (Letters, June 9). Mars's atmosphere is different from Earth's (Mars has no oceans), so studying Mars's atmosphere helps test our understanding of the Earth's atmosphere, for instance how global warming works.

There is a particular sort of life here on Earth, and life won't have evolved the same way on Mars. Martian life will contrast with life on Earth, with the understanding that this gives us. Studying Mars is actually studying ourselves.
Paul Murdin.
British National
Space Centre,
151 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1W 9SS.

NIGEL Wade argues that searching for evidence of life on Mars is of "no functional use" and therefore a waste of money. Sport, art, and music are also of no functional use, but they enrich people's lives, and people are prepared to pay a lot of money to enjoy them. The fact that science happens to generate saleable spin-offs is no reason to ignore its cultural value.
B J Craven.
49 Broompark,
East Menstrie,
Clackmannanshire FK11 7AN.

I DOUBT that expenditure on Eurofighter or Trident is justified in terms of potential enemies. In practice, the justification offered is quite different: "Leaders warned failure of [Eurofighter project] may cost 250,000 jobs" (June 5). Space exploration could also be justified in terms of jobs provided.
Donald Rooum.
31 Cressy House,
Hannibal Road,
London E1 3JE.

WHILE the European Space Agency and Nasa are spending public money on trips to Mars to look for evidence of life, much of the rest of the (more practical and relevant) scientific community is struggling for funds. I only wish that I could persuade the research funding bodies to divert billions of pounds to fund our research on the strength of such tenuous evidence.
(Dr) Gavin Whittaker.
Dept of Chemistry,
University of Edinburgh,
West Mains Road,
Edinburgh EH9 3JJ.

Please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear

United front

I WAS surprised in Sheila Rowbotham's obituary of union organiser Gertie Roche (June 9) to read "but after the [1970 Leeds clothing] strike the women felt abandoned by the men. Thus did they refuse to support them when male leaders were victimised".

Nothing convinces me that women workers ever abandoned the men, no matter how insolent and dismissive men unionists have been to women over the years. At the most, in my experience observing the 1984/5 miners' strike, when the miners' wives group was pushed back into the home after months of solidarity with their menfolk, women were disappointed rather than retributive.

Unfortunately, this civilised and tolerant response may well be why men with strong muscles, small brains and a willingness to punch women's teeth out took over the human species, ravaged the world, and accrued overweening power at the expense of the other gender. But, as events may now just be beginning to show, it holds great promise for a world where humans could actually deserve the description sapient.

We ain't there yet — but 120 women in Parliament means I can keep one small part of my being optimistic.
Tim Symonds.
46 Portland Place,
London W1N 3DG.

Stonehenge hinges on profit

MIKE Heyworth (Letters, June 10) wrongly assumes that English Heritage is concerned about preservation of a public site for the people. Really, Stonehenge is a lucrative fund-raising project.

In the name of "security" it has been turned into a restricted area. Its seven-foot fences are more concerned with stopping camera lenses than intruders. That way, we have to pay £3.70 to get close. Even if you agree to this extortion, make sure you don't go when English Heritage has a private tour. You will be ejected from the car park by uniformed guards and forced to watch as the tour group walks everywhere — and caresses the boulders. It doesn't surprise me that the "visionaries" at English Heritage want to seal off the whole area. Imagine how much they could charge then.
David Clubb.
70 Main Street, Hartford,
Huntingdon PE18 7YA.

RECENT events from the controversy over the Globe Theatre to the disposal of the last Comet airliner have shown that a debate needs to take place as to what aspects of our past are important, in what state should heritage be preserved and how do we pay for it. Part of that debate must be to look at English Heritage. Its role of custodian of selective properties, the arbiter regarding listing of buildings and its powers over development must be reviewed.
Nick Ellis.
97 Herons Wood,
Harlow, Essex CM20 1RT.

A squiffy poet

YOUR front-page picture of Dylan Thomas (June 7) was reversed, which is ironic as it ran over a story of David Kiely's work being hung every which way but the right way. There was also no credit. There could be copyright considerations. Your readers should be directed to the original which hangs — the right way round — at the National Museum & Gallery in Cardiff.
David Alston.
Keeper of Art, National
Museums of Wales,
Cathays Park, Caerdydd CF1 3NP.

Paedophiles in public: protection is the issue

THE case of Graham Seddon in Merseyside (Paedophile is still a risk to all children, says wife, June 10) highlights the difficulties of managing dangerous sexual abusers in the community. Ironically, although it has been possible since 1992 for judges to impose extended supervision at the time of sentence, such licences have been infrequently used.

The National Association for the Development of Work with Sex Offenders has consistently supported extended supervision for convicted sexual abusers and has argued that we may need to develop protocols for reviewing the sentences of those abusers who remain dangerous at the point of their release.

Many potentially dangerous abusers are indeed managed competently, and children protected. However, we need to develop inter-agency strategies at the highest possible level.
Lisa Markham.
Chair, Nota,
3 West Bar,
Sheffield S3 8PJ.

MOST offences of this kind are committed by men known to the child and whose contact with the child has been authorised by the child's carers. A very significant number go unreported or unconvicted. In this context, registration or public notification can have only a limited part in a risk reduction strategy.

This should include the appropriate use of lengthy custodial sentences and more effective and co-ordinated planning for the offender's release but there should also be greater access to treatment programmes.

It does seem curious that some offenders receive short custodial sentences with no treatment and no post-sentence supervision.
John Harding.
Chief Probation Officer, Inner
London Probation Service,
71-73 Great Peter Street,
London SW1P 2BN.

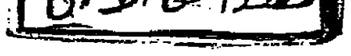
THE reference to us in your article on the outing of paedophiles by newspapers (Nightmare on any street, June 10) gave the impression that we have joined others in this practice. This is not our policy. We believe it is wrong to endanger people who, having served their sentences, may be trying to put their past behind them. Were we to discover a convicted paedophile deliberately positioning himself to meet children, however, we would have no hesitation in revealing his activities.

The case of Graham Handscombe, who committed suicide after we reported his arrest on allegations of disseminating child porn over the Internet (without identifying him) is a different matter. The fact that the coroner tried to represent this as "murder by newspaper" had more to do with arguments we had been having with the police over our investigatory activities in other directions and was in any case rejected by the coroner's jury.
Frank Branston.
Chairman,
Bedfordshire on Sunday,
22 Mill Street,
Bedford MK40 3HD.

A Country Diary

THE WREKIN: On Limekiln Lane the old hedgerow dogwoods are in flower. The umbels of tiny milk-bottle shaped buds burst into stars with four petals and four stamens around the stigma. Next to a dumped mattress is what looks like the remains of an exploded one, but it's the cotton stuffing of masses of poplar seeds. Across mown fields, worryingly smelly with grey, bag-muck fertiliser, and through woods to reach Golf Links Lane, evening begins to draw in. The upper reaches of this lane are very old and lined with wood avens, campions and wild garlic. The lane ends at what was once the Dormy House, a spooky old red-brick ruin when I was a kid; now levelled and greened for golf. As the ghosts of the Dormy House shake themselves loose from the light of day, the sun sets behind the Ercall woods and dreamy blue and coppery swirls light the solemn bulk of the Wrekin. Shadowy forms slip between woods and grass. Suddenly, startling bursts of water spray from a green, sending percussive bursts of water from sprinklers. As if galvanised by this insane display, the birds begin their evensong: cuckoo, pheasant, songbirds and owls all join in a wild and momentary chorus. Up on the top of Maddock's Hill a dog-sized hare lopes into the gloaming. The narrow ridge track through the edge of the Limekiln Woods is now in darkness. There's a loud rustling in the undergrowth above and suddenly I'm staring into the faces of two young badgers with mutual surprise and curiosity. They're not unduly concerned and carry on scratching, snuffling and munching behind a holly. A big sow badger with a pale creamy pelt comes to see what's going on, and slopes off down into a little ravine, out of range but watching. The darker the woods, the busier they get. The night air and the distant sounds are clear. It speaks of rain.

PAUL EVANS



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Diary

Matthew Norman

THE mother of all pay cuts has been announced — and swiftly unannounced — in Baghdad. On June 1, the BBC Monitoring Service picked up a statement from the Iraqi news agency INA, concerning the president's plan to cut salaries (including his own) to "encourage savings". According to the report, "His Excellency addressed the Cabinet: 'Today, I come to you to discuss a greater and more courageous move, aimed at honouring all state employees'." Robert Maxwell encouraged savings in much the same way, of course . . . , and, perhaps mindful of this, a day later Saddam's finance minister broadcast a correction on Iraqi TV. The report "contained a mistake which confused concerned readers," said Hikmat Ibrahim. "Leader President Saddam Hussein, may God preserve him, proposed a grant for each state employee equal to 50 per cent of his or her monthly salary and allowances." So he's giving out money rather than taking it, then, albeit that funds will be held in special accounts for "a year or two". Very odd. This tactic of leaking stories, seeing how they play, and then announcing the reverse seems familiar, but for the moment I can't quite place it.

MANDY Mandelson has his own problems with the press, meanwhile. In one of his periodic strops, Mandy has warned the media against operating in "a vacuum, a value-free world detached from the needs and lives of the rest of us". How wise, how true . . . and how sweet of Mandy to think of us. Meanwhile, rumours spread from the Cabinet Office that he is so depressed about standards of reporting that he plans to launch a state-owned newspaper, to spread the gospel of the Government's activities. In tribute to New Labour's favourite designer, it will be called Prada.

THE publisher Jonathan Cape calls with a couple of corrections to yesterday's item about Anne McElvoy. The Spectator deputy editor did not "ghost" Man Without A Face for the former East German spymaster Markus Wolf; she helped to edit it. And not only does Wolf not live in England but he has never even visited. These are not the first mistakes we have made about Anne — I once wrongly put her new husband Martin Ivens on the Times — and *they* almost certainly won't be the last. Meanwhile, the quest for her next Svengali, in succession to Mandy Mandelson and Mr Wolf, continues with the search for Pol Pot. The tragedy, given Anne's appetite for Markus Wolf's cooking — she loves to nibble, she says, on his juicy dumplings — is that the Emperor Bokassa is no longer with us. With him, Anne might have had a truly memorable meal. Or even been one.

ANGELA Billingham, a Labour MEP and vice president of the Oxfordshire Lawn Tennis Association, faxes in outrage after yesterday's item about Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski: Tim asked Greg what he'd buy if he had the money, Greg said "World peace", and Tim said "Good answer". I called for the sickbag, but Miss Billingham demurs. "Perhaps a more positive response," she writes, "would have been pleasure that two decent young tennis players . . . thought world peace to be at the top of their agenda." A more positive response indeed. And then the sickbag.

FOLLOWING the appearance of Mad Frank Fraser in the Charlie Kray trial, the underworld seethes and bubbles with speculation about another unlikely character witness. "The Guv'nor's aht," says the Arthur Mullard soundalike when we called Boris the Jackal Johnson yesterday. "Yus, mate, aht. He's gawn dahn the Blind Beggar wiv Bad Boy Billy Deedes to talk over the good old days, when the streets woz safe to walk. They go back a long way, and the Guv'nor never forgets a mate. Mind you," says the voice, with a chilly cackle, "he don't never forgets his enemies, neither. Capish?"

How the pollsters got it wrong in 1997

Commentary

Nick Sparrow

THERE is a strong temptation to accept the verdict of the poll pundits following the general election: "Pollsters restore tarnished reputation" (Guardian); "Bull's-eye forecasts win back credibility" (Sunday Times); "Why pollsters can feel self-satisfied" (Independent). Yet some may wonder how the pollsters can all claim the same victory in 1997. On one hand ICM predicted a 10 per cent winning margin; at the other extreme, NOP forecast a larger 22 per cent gap. Labour won by 13 per cent.

Pollsters themselves have not lost the opportunity to burnish their own reputations. Asked to comment on their own polls in the Market Research Society's newsletter, Tom Simpson of Harris wrote: "I believe the pollsters performed exceptionally well." Gallup claims that its innovations not only "furthered the science of opinion polling but raised the bar in terms of client service", and goes on to predict that the majority of polls at the next election will follow its lead. Bob Worcester of Mori asks "where were those shy Tories?", but omits to mention his final Times poll which had them 3.4 per cent too low or his final Evening Standard poll which under-estimated their share by 2.4 per cent.

An historical analysis of the polls shows that there is no room for complacency. Throughout the campaign (from March 19), only three polls (all by ICM) put Labour's lead somewhat lower than the result; and of the 44 polls predicting Labour would win by a larger margin than it achieved, 22 put the advantage at 20 per cent or more. Thus most polls continued to display the same extent of pro-Labour bias apparent in 1992.

The conclusion will not escape the reader that, in a closer election, the range of predictions made in 1997 would have led some pollsters to predict the wrong outcome and all the polls would have been damned again. Indeed, there are historical precedents to shake any complacency among the pollsters. In 1906 and 1945, similar landslide victories were followed by much tighter elections in 1910 and 1950 respectively.

Whether or not history repeats itself, 2001-2 could easily provide the pollsters with a much tougher test of their methods. This makes an honest review of the different methods used in 1997 not only desirable but essential. We should avoid the temptation to bask in the perceived glory of success and learn instead from the experience. For example, every poll asks people what they voted in the previous election. Such data, potentially, offers the perfect way of ensuring the political balance of any sample. But received wisdom ran that some people (especially Liberal Democrat voters) forget how they voted last time and some others apparently prefer to reconcile their past votes with their present intentions.

However, even before the election, research evidence suggested that both these tendencies were not nearly sufficient to account for the recall figures obtained on many polls, some of which had Labour winning the 1992 election outright! ICM went furthest in targeting a past vote figure for its polls. These targets made very modest allowance for the distortions of faulty recall. The procedure not only markedly improved the accuracy of our own final poll, it would have had the same effect on those produced by almost all the other polling companies.

In the election, some pollsters also decided to pay more attention to those people who said they would vote but did not know who they would vote for, or who refused to answer the question. No method for allocating these people is going to be perfect simply because the process involves some calculated guesswork.

Initial evidence does, however, suggest that where such adjustments were made they improved the accuracy of the predictions.

> We should avoid the temptation to bask in the perceived glory of success and learn from the experience

ICM was the only company to prompt voters with the names of the main parties immediately before asking the voting-intentions question. All 10 published ICM polls in the campaign put the Liberals within sampling error of their actual performance. Much of the narrowing of the gap between Labour and the Conservatives seen in other polls over the first two weeks of the campaign might therefore be attributed to an apparent increase in support for the Liberals at the expense of Labour. This suggests the rise in Liberal support seen in many recent elections may not be a result of their campaigning prowess but a function of the pollsters' question wording. In any event, a rise from an average 12.1 per cent in late March to 17.2 per cent on election day (a 43 per cent increase) looks to me to be too spectacular to be true.

Finally, for the first time two major polling companies (ICM and Gallup) used telephone polling during the campaign, while others stayed faithful to traditional face-to-face quota samples. The issue of which method would be best was argued passionately before the election. We cannot now avoid a proper investigation which aims to provide some answers.

In ICM's case the move to telephone polling appears to have paid off. However, apart from its final poll, Gallup's telephone samples mainly produced the same Labour-biased results as the quota polls. Clearly a decision to move to telephone polling is not the simple magic move Gallup would like to claim.

It took a lot of courage to experiment extensively with new methods and courage also to stay loyal to methods that failed in 1992. This year did not provide all the answers, but important lessons can be learnt by all.

Nick Sparrow is managing director of ICM Research, which conducts the Guardian's polls

Bully for Barbara Castle and bully for Blair

Ian Aitken

IN THE past few weeks Tony Blair has come in for some high-falutin criticism for his post-electoral distribution of government jobs. He has been accused of undermining the Civil Service by drafting in lots of so-called political advisers, some of whom may — the ultimate affront — be given the right to order Sir Humphrey about. Blair, say his critics, is taking us towards a corrupt American "spoils system" in which each administration sacks the placemen of its predecessor and substitutes its own.

Sir Humphrey himself, in the person of Cabinet Secretary Sir Robin Butler, has even let it be known that he is "seriously unrelaxed" — a Sir Humphrey phrase if ever there was one — about some of these jobs for the boys. Meanwhile, surviving Tory MPs complain that they amount to a "politicisation" of the Civil Service — something which is assumed to be morally outrageous.

Never mind that the last government did more to politicise the Civil Service that any previous one, or that Sir Robin did remarkably little to stop them. But the truth is that Lady Thatcher's way of bringing the Whitehall mandarins to heel was to convince them that, far from being expected to offer impartial advice, their preferment depended on *not* giving unwelcome advice.

But Mrs T was right about one thing: the Civil Service isn't geared to helping ministers who achieve office under a radical mandate. At best, their duty is to warn of the possible consequences of radical change. At worst, they can be plain obstructive. This wasn't a problem for pre-Thatcherite Conservative prime ministers since, by definition, radical change wasn't on their agenda. But it has been a constant problem for Labour prime ministers pledged to socialist change.

THE classic example of this is a remark attributed to Philip Snowden, chancellor in the MacDonald government which was brought down by the 1931 crash. When his Tory successor took Sterling off the gold standard — the contemporary equivalent of coming out of the ERM — Snowden allegedly complained: "Nobody told us we could do that." The nobody in question was the Sir Humphrey of his day.

Just how much mandarin trouble Labour ministers have had to contend with is chronicled in detail in the diaries of Dick Crossman, Tony Benn and Barbara Castle. Lady Castle wrote: "I thank God for my ministerial team, and for the special advisers. Without them a minister is almost certain to be swamped by the sheer pressure of the senior officials surrounding him or her." And again: "I welcomed my officials' frankness when they disagreed with me, and only asked that their views should be balanced by the attendance round the table of dedicated socialists who were in deep agreement with my policy."

Bully for Barbara, say I — and bully for Blair, too. Except, of course, that the odds are now heavily against any of Blair's appointees being "dedicated socialists", at least in the Castle sense of that term. If any of them were, they would find it difficult to be in "deep agreement" with their minister's policy.

THE citizens of my local village — Highgate Village, to be exact — have long been aware that the yob culture isn't confined to Essex or the working class. We have what is justly described as a "minor" public school smack in the middle of the community, and its supposed young gentlemen surge up and down the High Street every lunchtime, shouting vulgarities and chomping prodigious quantities of junk food.

But a couple of weeks ago this routine yobbishness erupted into something rather worse, when a handful of sixthformers celebrated the end of their schooldays by staging a mini-riot inside the school and then, when they were told to go home, predictably transferring their mini-riot to the village square. They caused such public mayhem that the police were eventually called. Later, some of them broke into the school and did some minor damage. Again, they were confronted by the police. But for reasons which escape everyone, including teachers, no arrests were made. The widespread view is that they should at least have been hauled off to the nick and their parents sent for.

The headmaster has apologised to us peasants for the "dreadful behaviour" of his boys, insisting reasonably that only a handful were involved. He blamed uncaring parents who hadn't taught their offspring to reject "the yob culture which is so prevalent in our society". How true, how very true. But where has one heard that sort of defence before?

Well, down the hill in the hard-up bits of Camden, Islington and Tottenham, as it happens. Where state schools in similar difficulties are being closed down or humiliated by David Blunkett's hit squads. And where the police take a sterner attitude, especially if the yobs are black.

Mike Hewitt predicts that BA's new marketing strategy could make it the high flyer in the airline business of the 21st century, making the cost of £60 million a snip

Flying the global image

CORPORATE makeovers have traditionally had a bad press in Britain. When BT introduced the "pied piper" at a cost of £50m, ridicule was the first reaction. And when BP slanted the shields on its filling stations and stationery, pundits and would-be consumer champions were aghast. How, they asked, could these firms justify spending so much on tinkering with signboards — especially when, in BT's case, there were plenty of disgruntled employees whose jobless futures made a bleak contrast to the well-paid opulence of the design world?

On the face of it, British Airways was walking straight into the same minefield when it signalled, well ahead of time, that it planned to change its image. The fact that, as the changes were unveiled, trade unions were balloting members on strike action over the sale of the company's catering division could not have made better ammunition for the cynics. Perhaps more dangerous still, for what was in recent memory a nationalised industry, is the accusation that it is back-pedalling on its Britishness. British Telecom and British Petroleum have decided they want to be known by their initials, and you will not find the words Imperial Chemical Industries on any ICI stationery these days, so it might have seemed logical for BA to follow suit.

In hinting ahead of time that they *might* follow suit, the airline's spin doctors ensured that those who were ready to be outraged on that score find themselves deflated. Certainly the new design looks rather less like the Ministry of Air Travel than its predecessor, but the word "British" is still there, bold as brass — or bold as 100 per cent magenta, 100 per cent yellow, in this case. This is less an example of abandoning Britishness than of embracing a new definition of what Britain's about. Right now Britain's image in the world is on a high. London is, if we believe two-dozen New York journalists, "the world's coolest city", England is winning Test matches and World Cup qualifiers, and there are youthful, optimistic hands at the controls of Government.

These newly painted planes are defiantly not a little piece of England in the air. They are local transport for the global village. They stand a good chance of winning over the new generation of customers who see themselves less as adherents to one country than as global consumers, picking the best wherever it orginates. That could mean American jeans, German cars — and British Airways.

"One of the safest cards to play when you're doing international brand work is national identity," says Simon Anholt, managing director of the cultural consultancy World Writers. "Levi's works easily in any country because it's based on an Americanism which everyone understands. Swiss banks do the same thing — and British airlines can use British values of service, reliability, competence." All very cosy in theory. But, says Anholt, "the fundamental truth is that people hate the Brits — if you're travelling you don't want to be doing it with a bunch of Britons."

That's not a view we will ever hear expressed by any of BA's well-briefed staff, but thinking along those lines will certainly have cropped up in planning the swing away from "flying the flag". BA's strategy is much subtler than simply paring away its Britishness. Those tailplane images by local artists mean BA owns, in airline terms, the national identities of many of its local competitors. Where does that blue tracery of Delft on a BA jumbo leave KLM? What is South African Airways' answer to those tribal paintings?

Design alone is not going to give BA the global dominance it craves. But the airline business is one in which, whichever carrier passengers choose, they are likely to be flying in a broadly similar product of the Boeing factory, which makes the finishing touches like the service, the food — and the design — all the more important. BA's makeover extends way beyond the paintwork on jumbos to include napkins, uniforms, check-in desks, Club lounges and tickets. It is so far removed from the way giant corporations are supposed to look that passengers might be forgiven for forgetting that they are flying with Global Megacorp and start to add warmth and humour to reliability and competence in the list of British Airways emotional assets.

Regulators may stymie BA's attempts to buy its way to global-superpower status by acquiring rivals, but the power of images is one which governments cannot block. If the new livery can deliver half of what it promises, £60m starts to look cheap.

Mike Hewitt is editor of Marketing magazine

Life after death between the covers

DJ Taylor offers seven handy hints to today's literary upstarts on how to achieve everlasting media fame

FROM Dylan Thomas' "long-lost" poem to Tennessee Williams' newly discovered play, the air above literary London this past week has been thick with the cries of the long-departed. In no other branch of public life, apparently, is it so easy to keep obscurity at bay. But what should the aspiring 30-year-old novelist do to entice the biographers of the late 21st century? Here are seven imperishable rules for preserving one's literary immortality.

1 Unpublished works. At some point in your early 20s place all the poems you wrote in school magazines in a box marked "to be opened after my death". These will make an impressive posthumous volume of juvenilia, or bulk out your collected poems to acceptable length.

2 Write lots of letters. Be as vague as possible about dates and arrangements ("Yes, I shall be there," is the best reply to any invitation); a habit that biographers find perennially alluring. Make sure that letters to close friends are routinely insulting to other close friends, who may have to review your Collected Letters after your death (see Philip Larkin).

3 Have at least one mad relative. Wives are best (TS Eliot, Thackeray), siblings will do at a pinch. If all else fails, go mad yourself.

4 Keep a diary. Ideally this should be written in code (Samuel Pepys). At the very least it should ascribe the vilest depravities to people known only by their initials, and you will not find the words Imperial Chemical Industries (Dickens). The chronicler of monogamic bliss should *always* be a serial adulterer.

6 Sex. A difficult one. As a general rule, either lots or none at all. For best results, sprinkle aniseed imprecision across the path of the biographical bloodhounds, for example by dedicating each of your 13 novels, mysteriously, to a different person ("To Suzy, in fond memory"), or leaving trifling sums of money in your will to half-a-dozen girls you were at college with.

7 Death. Only two options. Either prematurely, leaving tantalising shards of promise, or in your nonage, festooned with honours, amid a circle of younger friends, who can contribute to your memorial volume. Above all, remember that immortality has to be worked at. As Shakespeare observed, "Time hath, my Lord, a wallet at his back, wherein he puts alms for oblivion."

Make that first payment now.

DJ Taylor's latest novel is English Settlement (Vintage)

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Salvatore Fiume

Monumental mystery man

SALVATORE Fiume, who has died aged 81, was one of the leading figurative artists of postwar Italy. In paintings and sculptures he produced highly styl-ised, even distorted representations of conventional subjects, in particular the female nude. This combination of conservatism and modernity was undoubtedly influenced by artists, such as Mario Sironi, who were associated with the *Novecento* movement during the Fascist period. Moreover, his work often created a dream-like, surreal atmosphere reminiscent of Giorgio De Chirico, and anticipating the work of *Transavanguardia* artists, including Sandro Chia and Mimmo Paladino.

Fiume was born at Comiso in Sicily but was trained at the Istituto d'Arte in Urbino from 1931 to 1936, after which he moved to Milan. He remained in northern Italy, eventually settling in Canzo, near Como. Although he published a moderately successful autobiographical novel, *Vita Gioconda* (Happy Life), in 1943, his paintings received little attention until 1946, when he exhibited under a fictitious Andalusian name, Francisco Ueyo.

In 1950 his works, no longer pseudonymous, were shown at the Venice Biennale. He showed the *Isole di Statue* (Islands of Statues), depicting immense, highly abstracted female figures, standing on islands set in an eerie De Chiricoesque city, where blank modern buildings vie with classical temples.

The combination of geometric rigour and poetic ambiguity that characterises these paintings also appears in Fiume's large-scale works. These ranged from decorative schemes for transatlantic liners and the Time and Life offices in New York — all early 1950s — to stage designs for Milan, London, Rome and Palermo opera houses. Perhaps the most dramatic of Fiume's monumental commissions was the apse mosaic in the new Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth (1967).

These, however, seem modest in comparison with the church designs that he displayed in 1976 at Rome's Palazzo delle Esposizioni. These plans, were for a Byzantine-style basilica surmounted by a colossal sculpted head of Christ, and were withdrawn from exhibition by the communist city council, which appeared to have regarded them as ostentatious. Similarly Fiume's extraordinary scheme, published in 1991, for a presidential palace in Guinea which would have taken the form of a Roman triumphal arch, was never executed for political reasons.

As Fiume himself admitted, there was an essential difference between his designs, so close to the cityscapes of his paintings, and more conventional building projects: "The architects are guided by two conditions: capital and materials; I, instead, am free."

Just as Fiume's architectural fantasies tended towards a classical style, so his paintings also abound with references to the antique. On occasion these take the form of specific ancient subjects, such as the Three Graces or *The Aeneid*, for which he produced a series of illustrations in 1990. More usually, his allusions have an enigmatic, surreal quality: columns metamorphose into mannequins — again recalling De Chirico — while mysterious narratives, often violent or erotic, take place between human figures, centaurs and Minoan-like bulls.

The frequent appearance of the bull in Fiume's work also reveals his admiration for Picasso, who often uses this creature as a symbol of passion or cruelty. Fiume's paintings also include occasional parodies of Cubism, which are juxtaposed with references to Raphael and other heroic figures of the past. Fiume's most revered Old Master was another Spaniard, Goya, whose memorable clothed and naked *Majas* of the 1800s were a vital inspiration for Fiume's own recumbent female nudes, although these are also indebted to Manet, Gauguin and the Algerian paintings of Delacroix.

As well as his odalisques, Fiume also produced a series of works concentrating on certain areas of the female body, isolated like details in a landscape. These were all painted in a sensuous, almost Baroque style with rich colours and expressive brushwork. His sculptures of women drew on quite different sources, applying angular Cubist shapes to the forms of tribal totems. As always, however, the element of abstraction does not make excessive demands on the viewer, nor does it obscure his fundamental aim, the celebration of the female sex.

Fiume expressed his appreciation of women in colourful interviews, as well as in his poems and plays, revealing attitudes that might sometimes offend delicate younger generations. His admiration for the female roles of mother, lover and muse did not prevent him from working with his daughter Laura, one of several painters with whom he revived traditional practices of artistic collaboration, as *Novecento* artists had attempted to do earlier in the century.

With Fiume's death, Italian art has lost not only one of its most vivid and outspoken characters, *un vero dongiovanni* — in the words of the photographer Walter Mori — but also a distinguished postwar champion of classicism.

Christopher Masters

Salvatore Fiume, artist, born October 23, 1915; died June 3, 1997

Broad brush . . . Fiume made a mark as painter, sculptor, set designer GIANCARLO CALOJA

Geometric rigour and poetic ambiguity were combined in work that often recalled the dream-like, surreal atmosphere created by Giorgio De Chirico

John Tee

Benchmarks for the family

JOHN Tee, who has died aged 65 from the complications of an operation for cancer, said that his own many mistakes had made him less judgmental of others. He was a prominent London magistrate and a remarkable man whose life was a testimony against smugness. As a deputy chairman of the Inner London youth and family panels, he displayed a wisdom informed by both his difficult childhood and his domestic life.

John — or Sam as he was known to his family — had a disturbed and emotionally deprived childhood which left him determined later to do what he could to reduce the damage that children can suffer as a result of their families. He was a chartered surveyor by profession, who joined a West End company before national service as a Royal Engineers officer. In 1959 he set up Fresson and Tee, with Ken Fresson, where he worked until his death.

He married Nelly in 1962 and together they had four children — two daughters and two sons. They separated in 1975. He was appointed a justice of the peace and became a juvenile court magistrate in 1980. He was fiercely proud of the voluntary nature of his position and strived to use the justice system to help children — and he was a trustee of the Pre-School Playgroups' Association for the last 10 years.

In 1988 a fellow magistrate asked him for professional help with the purchase of a building under the auspices of the Peper Harow Foundation, to set up what became Thornby Hall in Northamptonshire — a therapeutic community for disturbed adolescents of which he became a trustee.

In 1991 John was elected to the committee of magistrates and was also elected vice chairman of the inner London family panel. In 1992 he was appointed to the Lord Chancellor's inner London advisory committee. When he was put up for chairman of the inner London family panel, he wanted to make sure that the panel understood just who they were electing. In a personal statement he said that he had been living with his same-sex partner for the past 18 years. He was elected overwhelmingly. By announcing that he was gay, he ensured that sexuality was less of an issue for others in the future.

He was worried that the tabloids might harass him. But the only time he had to deal with the press was when reporting restrictions were lifted on one of the cases over which he happened to preside. He found his name featured prominently in the newspapers when he had to rule on the Boy George paternity case.

As chairman of the family panel, he shared the view that the family jurisdiction in central London should be organised from one centre and not distributed across the boroughs and this was achieved with the recent opening of the Inner London and City Family Proceedings Court at Wells Street.

The trauma John experienced at the end of his marriage led him to consult a counsellor, and he in turn studied counselling. His gardening led him to becoming a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society. He used his bicycle to go to dinner parties and court, and was a member of the London Cycling Campaign. His love of the Thames had begun in childhood and he bought a Henley riverside house and was a member of the Upper Thames Sailing Club. John Tee was an enthusiast of life, with an energy that made his sudden death all the harder to bear for his family and friends.

As a juvenile court magistrate he strived to use the justice system to help children

Scarlett MacGwire

John Samuel Tee, surveyor and magistrate, born July 27 1931; died May 31 1997

Letter:

'Taters' Chatham

Mark Ellin writes: Duncan Campbell's obituary of the celebrated cat-burglar George "Taters" Chatham *(June 7)* was vastly offensive and embarrassingly old-fashioned.

I can't believe, in the Guardian of all places, that we're still being invited to applaud the sepia-tinged capers of the Crafty Crims of Yesteryear simply because they apparently possessed some spurious notion of principles (the repulsive "Taters", we learn, looked down on gangsters and bravely carried out all his crimes himself).

Clearly principles didn't stop him breaking into the next door house if the one he'd entered wasn't up to scratch (how tremendous we'd all feel if either one was ours), or restrain the loveable old rogue from routinely coshing policemen and van drivers.

We're all terrified of a life-altering visit from one of today's urban thieves, and we detest their level of cruelty and malice, and yet we're all supposed to be buffing up fond anecdotes about their no-less-despicable forefathers.

There's an irony there somewhere.

Vice-Admiral Sir Alastair Ewing

On the bridge of the last battleship

THE LAST captain of Britain's last battleship, Vice-Admiral Sir Alastair Ewing, who has died aged 88, saw service in the harshest naval theatre of the second world war — the northerly route to Russia, where he commanded a destroyer in the PQ 17 convoy disaster.

In the continuous Arctic daylight of midsummer 1942 the Germans attacked by all available means the merchant shipping convoys en route from Britain via Iceland to Murmansk. U-boats and aircraft would strike west of Bear Island and heavy surface forces, led by the battleship Tirpitz, would attack east of it.

The British sailed PQ 17 eastward to Russia on June 27. Escorting heavy ships were ordered not to sail east of Bear Island if the Tirpitz left her Norwegian base: west of it, 13 Allied submarines lay in wait for her. The 35 merchantmen were closely escorted by six destroyers and a small swarm of lesser vessels. Four cruisers provided intermediate escort to the north and the Home Fleet provided very distant cover to the south. The freighters carried 157,000 tonnes of military supplies. Much of the shipping and a substantial minority of the escorting forces were American.

The first clash came on July 1. PQ 17 was sighted by U-boats and the Luftwaffe as the four cruisers sailed past the convoy to cover it from 40 miles north. Evasive action and a fog prevented any loss. On July 3 Royal Air Force reconnaissance discovered that the Tirpitz and an escort had put to sea, whereabouts unknown. PQ 17 passed north of Bear Island that night. By July 5 chief of naval staff Admiral Sir Dudley Pound knew that the Tirpitz, the world's most powerful battleship outside Japan, had joined up with other major units at Altenfjord in the far north, but bad weather barred the RAF from finding out more.

This implied that PQ 17 and its cruiser screen, sailing east 40 miles apart, were threatened by massive surface attack. Pound's terrible dilemma was whether to keep the convoy together against the known U-boat and aircraft threat or to disperse it against the feared one from the Tirpitz, as contemporary tactics decreed — the manuals were unhelpful on what to do in the event of all three.

At 9.36pm Pound ordered the four cruisers to withdraw to the west. His second message told the convoy to disperse; a few minutes later, the third and final signal ordered: "Convoy is to scatter."

The Tirpitz was back in Altenfjord, hundreds of miles to the north, after the briefest foray — cancelled, when the Germans discovered that PQ 17 had scattered. This left the Luftwaffe free to sink 12 freighters and a rescue-ship while the U-boats destroyed 10 more merchantmen at will.

Only 11 freighters and two rescue-ships got to Russia with barely 60,000 tonnes of munitions — a casualty rate of two-thirds, including 430 tanks and 210 planes for Soviet forces.

Lieutenant-Commander Ewing was captain of HMS Offa, a destroyer with the close escort led by Commander J E Broome. Both men and several colleagues were soon perplexed by the fact that nothing happened in the area after the dispersal. Ewing and others considered staying with the freighters, but the order to scatter was unmistakably, tragically, clear.

Similar puzzlement affected the needlessly retreating cruiser screen, which also sighted nothing. The German price for their huge victory was five aircraft lost. The Americans and the merchant seamen were furious with the Royal Navy. Pound was by then a sick man under huge stress; his blunder was to take a tactical decision out of the hands of the competent commander on the spot, Rear-Admiral L H K Hamilton with the cruiser screen.

Ewing came from a Scottish borders landowning, military family. He won two mentions in dispatches for his convoy work. After passing out of Dartmouth in 1926, he served in larger ships before transferring to destroyers in the Mediterranean in 1930.

He had a prominent hand in the sinking of two U-boats in the first six months of the war and went on to win the DSC for his part in six Russian convoy runs. He commanded three destroyers and a destroyer-leader during the war. Postwar, he was promoted captain and served as a staff officer in Washington for the formation of Nato.

He returned to Britain to command HMS Vanguard, the Navy's last "big gun" ship, leading the Coronation Naval Review in 1953 shortly before she went into reserve — she was scrapped in 1960. He retired as a vice-admiral with the CB and KBE in 1962.

He and his first wife, Diana — they married in 1942 — then moved to the US, where he dealt in property and boats. Ewing returned to England in 1980 on her death. He married his second wife, Anne, in 1984; she, his son and her children from an earlier marriage survive him.

Dan Van Der Vat

Vice-Admiral Sir Alastair Ewing, naval officer, born April 10, 1909; died May 19, 1997

Ewing . . . two mentions in dispatches for convoy work

Birthdays

Tony Allcock, bowler, 42; **John Aspinall**, casino and zoo-owner, 70; **Diana Armfield**, textile designer and painter, 77; **Michael Cacoyannis**, film and stage director, 75; **Jacques Cousteau**, undersea explorer, 87; **Lyndsey de Paul**, singer, 47; **John Dyson**, cricketer, 43; **Sir Marcus Fox**, former Conservative MP, 70; **Athol Fugard**, playwright, 65; **Dame Beryl Grey**, prima ballerina, 70; **Rachael Heyhoe Flint**, cricketer, broadcaster, 57; **Alan Howarth MP**, junior employment minister, 53; **Hugh Laurie**, actor, 38; **Juliet Lodge**, Professor of European Politics, Hull University, 49; **Paul Mellon**, arts patron, 90; **Michael Meyer**, novelist and translator, 76; **Jenny Pitman**, racehorse trainer, 51; **Timothy Sainsbury**, former Conservative minister, 65; **Jackie Stewart**, racing driver, 58; **Richard Todd**, actor, 78; **Dr Sir Gerard Vaughan**, former Conservative Minister, 74; **Gene Wilder**, actor, 62; **Lt-Gen Sir Michael Wilkes**, Adjutant General, 51.

Death Notices

HOWARD, Bob. Suddenly on 5th June 1997. Loving husband of Dorothy and father of Robert. A dear friend and colleague, respected full-time official at MSF Liverpool. Will be sadly missed.

SKINNER, Edward Jonathan Quentin. Suddenly in London on June 6. Much loved son of Joy and Jimmy Skinner and brother of Catherine, Sarah and Stephen. Memorial service at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, 4.00pm Tuesday July 1. Enquiries to J.H Kenyon 0171-229 3510.

TURNER, Geoffrey Harry. In his 97th year. Much loved by Alison, Rosita, Nigel, Katy, Jonquil and his many friends. On the 5th of June at home in Oxton, Birkenhead.

In Memoriam

SIMMONS. Caroline, 11.6.1957 – 4.6.1977. Lovingly remembered on her 40th birthday as always, by her sister Hilary Wright.

Births

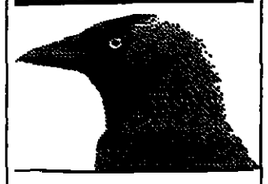
DROWEED. Congratulations to Claire and Martin on the birth of Thomas Charles, on June 4th 1997. With love from all the family.

Birthdays

WISEMAN, Julia,
When as in silks my Julia goes,
Why then, methinks, how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes!
Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That vibration each way free,
O, how that glittering taketh me!
Many happy returns on your birthday.
much love Richard.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4129 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

Jackdaw



Mod cons

WHY do we withhold our enthusiasm? We speak without embarrassment of "loving" Mozart. Are we allowed to love works of art? Do we, and, if we did, would we admit to it? The word seems wrong, uncalled for, certainly over the top if applied to modern art. We might admit to loving a Constable, but an Ayres, a McKeever? That would be an affectation. Our open enthusiasm for music, even modern music and our informed response to it, have grown miraculously since Myra Hess gave her wartime recitals in a National Gallery, bare except for one picture. Now we have art and music aplenty and I pin some hesitant faith on the thought that where love of music flourishes love of art will follow.

Children now do art at school and discuss art and are taken to museums and galleries. That must be good (in my school of blessed memory the word art was never heard). I hope it breeds the slow inquiring attention the best art calls for. Listening to music calls for time, and we know we haven't heard it unless we give it that. Art takes time too, and a similar kind of attention. Familiarity removes barriers and breeds faith. Instead, egged on by the media's need for conflict, art is delivered to us as a kind of sport, a passing show of winners and losers, goals and fouls, quickly forgotten as we await the next event. Betting on the winner of the Turner prize is symbolic of a wider attitude. *Art Quarterly challenges the way we look at modern art.*

Game boys

TECHNOLOGICALLY enabled realism goes beyond better images, better sound, better mimicked gameplay. With most new games from major software houses now supporting networks, you no longer need to explore a demon infested dungeon of your own: you can do it in the company of fellow gameplayers on other computers on the network — or even pit yourself against them. Your competitors are no longer computer controlled but human controlled — and believe me, knowing you are playing another living being adds a pulse racing extra dimension to the game. The Internet, one huge network, has sprouted games forums where players can log on to battle the very best in the world — but it's also sickeningly gratifying to see your boss explode in a scarlet fountain as you blast him with a missile launcher.

The arguments programmers currently wield are compelling. Why watch Die Hard when you can be John McClane? Why watch the big soccer final when you can play in the Cup yourself? Why pay £9.95 to see the fight live from Vegas when you can be the one punching the digital lights out of Mike Tyson? But of course in each case the two experiences are utterly distinct, and which you choose comes down to mood — would you rather be a spectator or a competitor? *Sight and Sound gives a new meaning to being an armchair supporter.*

Style warp

BY the 1970s plastics had lost their novelty and many of the products themselves, if they had not already punctured or collapsed, were showing signs of rapid obsolescence. In the dark ages of the 1980s plastics were decidedly out of favour in the home — wood and wicker and other "natural" materials being favoured in their place.

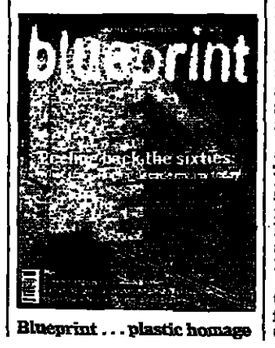
Suddenly, though, in the mid 1990s, the wheel has turned full circle and synthetic materials are back. Walk into any remotely style conscious domestic retail outlet today and you couldn't fail to notice the explosion on the market for plastic accessories — from translucent orange toothbrush holders, apple green magazine racks and aqua blue bins to inflatable clocks and lamps.

The last time plastics enjoyed such a vogue was 30 years ago, and it almost seems as if that in rediscovering these materials designers have found a way to have fun again, just as they did in the 1960s.

In the 1990s the tones and textures are different — matt finished, translucent acid colours have replaced the smooth opaque reds, yellows, oranges and whites of the sixties — but the way in which plastic as a material is being exploited so ingeniously and ebulliently once again bears strong similarities to the earlier period.

Are the designers today conscious of history repeating itself? Are they aware that some of their earlier ideas are pre-figured by the work of an earlier generation? Frightening as it may sound to those of us who predate them, today's designers were born as late as the 1970s and have no direct recollection of the previous decade.

Have the sixties lead to inspiration or imitation asks Blueprint



Blueprint . . . plastic homage

Jackdaw wants your jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; write Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الأصل

Moscow bank fears £6m chicken fraud, page 12

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FinanceGuardian

KATSUYUKI Sugita (centre), new president and other new, young board members of Dai-Ichi Kangyo Bank (DKB), seen yesterday bowing in abject apology to shareholders, customers and Japanese society for the bank's illegal loans to a racketeer. "The road to regaining the trust we have lost is going to be a long one. I am very much aware of what a rugged climb we have ahead of us," Mr Sugita said after four more DKB executives were arrested for their part in a scandal engulfing Japan's financial community. The bank dismissed half its board and sacked 21 directors.

Officials at DKB and Nomura are accused of lending billions of yen to Ryuichi Koike, who is suspected of extorting money in return for non-disruption of shareholder meetings.

PHOTOGRAPH: NAOKAZU ONUMA

£3.6bn bid for Energy Group

Simon Beavis and Roger Cowe

THE Government was last night facing its first real industrial policy test with the announcement that the Energy Group, the demerged Hanson company which includes Eastern Electricity, was in bid talks with the US group Pacificorp and could be taken over in a £3.6 billion bid.

Such a move would be the first takeover in the electricity sector since the election and would be the first time one of the 12 regional electricity companies, privatised in 1990, had been taken over for a second time.

The City believes the Government will be forced to give the bid the all-clear, in a move which would immediately unleash a new burst of takeover activity among privatised utilities. These could include shots at Southern Electric, the only surviving independent REC, and for the power generators, National Power and PowerGen, which are protected by state golden shares.

With more than half the original 12 RECs already in the hands of US predators after last year's takeover binge in the industry, the audacious move would put the new Trade and Industry Secretary, Margaret Beckett, on the spot to spell out the Government's stance on takeovers.

She was highly critical of her predeccessor, Ian Lang, for failing to apply a consistent approach to electricity bids while allowing the industry to be restructured by takeovers.

News of the possible bid was released in a brief Stock Exchange statement from Energy Group saying it was in talks with Pacificorp which could lead to a recommended cash offer for the company.

It added that any bid would have to be pitched at a 20 per cent premium to last night's closing price of 580p a share. This would value the group, which also controls coal-fired power stations leased from PowerGen and National Power and the Peabody coal-mining business in the US, at more than £3.6 billion.

Pacificorp — based in Portland, Oregan — has a stock market price tag of only $6.1 billion (£3.7 billion) but has already shown itself to be one of America's most aggressive electricity companies. Only last month it laid out plans to grab a 20 per cent share of the world's competitive electricity markets in an attempt to boost its market value to $30 billion.

At home it supplies power in parts of seven states — Idaho, California, Montana, Oregan, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. Overseas it has already made its presence felt in Australia, where in just over a year it has snapped up 40 per cent of the market in the state of Victoria. The group had sales in the first quarter of the year of $1.1 billion and of $4.3 billion for 1996.

Eastern was created as part of the break-up of the Hanson group, which also saw chemicals activities and Imperial Tobacco set up as independent companies. It was floated off in February with a value of £2.7 billion and has already started its own US expansion with the acquisition of a US power marketing company, Citizens Lehman Power.

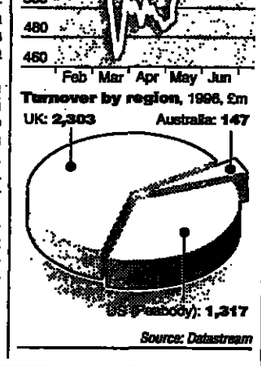
A takeover would yield huge pay-offs to Eastern's directors. Their 12-month service agreements allow them to walk away with two year's pay following a change in control.

Contracts specify that the notice period required from the company doubles to two years in the 12 months following a takeover. And they say directors can resign within that first year to trigger the golden handshake.

In the case of chief executive Derek Bonham that would be worth £900,000. Eastern Electricity boss John Devaney, who picked up more than £1 million when his company was acquired by Hanson, would receive £700,000.

Full of Eastern promise

1990: Eastern privatised for £647.7 million
July 1995: Hanson buys Eastern for £2.5 billion
Feb 1996: Hanson announces demerger plan
April 1996: Eastern buys three power stations for £1.7bn
Feb 1997: Floats as Energy Group with value of £2.7bn
June 1997: £3.6bn bid approach from Pacificorp



Pension law flawed, says judge

Richard Miles

A HIGH Court Judge yesterday urged the Government to intervene in a pensions dispute after ruling that two privatised electricity companies had acted lawfully in seizing £350 million of surplus pension funds to pay for early redundancies.

In an unexpected blow to pensioners and staff in the electricity industry, Mr Justice Robert Walker told National Grid and National Power that they did not have to repay the money to their pension scheme, overturning an earlier ruling by the Pension Ombudsman, an independent arbitrator.

But Justice Walker said in a written judgment that it was "a matter of real public concern" that the use of such vast sums should seem to depend on "subtle and complex" arguments, and suggested that the Government might want to introduce legislation to prevent similar disputes arising in future.

Yesterday's landmark ruling will nevertheless come as a profound relief to the electricity industry, since 21 companies are bound by the rules of the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme. They faced the prospect of having to reimburse £1 billion in higher benefits to about 200,000 former workers.

The original complaint against National Grid was brought by retired power workers, David Laws and Reginald Mayes, who argued that more of the company's £62 million pension surplus should have been used to boost benefits for members, rather than finance a programme of early redundancies. Mr Laws described the ruling as "terrible news".

He said: "Workers in the nationalised electricity industry have contributed to these funds all our working lives, and now the privatised companies suddenly see there is a pot of gold. The privatised companies saw this as a way of funding the laying off of people. That cannot be right. It is even putting at risk future payments of our pensions."

Stephens Innocent, the firm of solicitors acting on behalf of Mr Laws and Mr Mayes, said it was likely they would appeal against the decision.

National Grid, owner of the country's transmission network, was so convinced it would lose the case that it had briefed journalists on its contingency plans. Yesterday, it said: "We are pleased that the Court Judgment confirms that at all times National Grid acted properly in the matter."

Mr Justice Walker said ombudsman Dr Julian Farrand's decision in February to order National Grid to repay £43 million, 70 per cent of the surplus, was based on a misunderstanding of the pension scheme's terms and the employer's duties in dealing with surplus. In a connected judgment, he also upheld National Power's entitlement to two-thirds of a £377 million surplus.

Acknowledging his ruling would come as a big disappointment to the pensioners, he said that "a general exclusion of employers from surplus would tend to make employers very reluctant to contribute to the pension schemes more than the bare minimum they get away with". This might ultimately lead to the demise of salary-based pension schemes.

The costs of the action, unofficially estimated at about £1 million, are to be shared by the two companies and the National Grid pension fund.

'How many angels can stand on the point of a needle?'

Richard Miles on the battle for million pound surpluses

YESTERDAY's judgment in the High Court marks the latest skirmish in a battle between employers and pensioners' groups over the division of surplus assets in pension funds.

Bumper stock market returns during the late Eighties led to large surpluses in many funds, allowing employers to take a contributions holiday and so cut their staff costs.

Sometimes companies used surplus cash to finance job cuts or restructuring — at the risk of not having sufficient cash to keep pensioners' benefits in line with living costs.

After protests, some companies reversed their strategies and increased benefits. The Mineworkers' Pension Scheme recently upped weekly payments by £5 a week.

More commonly, former workers complained to the Pensions Ombudsman, Dr Julian Farrand, who has fought high-profile court battles, notably against Hillsdown Holdings. He took on utility companies, where surpluses emerged after privatisation, and drew blood from the Government over £168 million seized from the pension fund of National Bus Company before privatisation.

Most pensions disputes hang on technicalities. As Mr Justice Robert Walker said yesterday, it often boils down to an argument about "how many angels can stand on the point of a needle".

Labour's pizza man still waits for Blair's call

Roger Cowe

CHRIS Haskins was exhibiting a measured calm yesterday over his absence from the lengthening list of top business people who have been given jobs by the Labour government.

It would be easy to see why the chairman of Northern Foods might be seething at the Johnny-come-latelys who have jumped on the Labour bandwagon while loyalists such as he have been waiting in vain by the telephone.

BP's David Simon, Martin Taylor of Barclays' and Peter Davies of the Pru are examples of business leaders who never quite wore their Labour colours on their sleeve, yet have been brought in to help the Government.

Mr Haskins, on the other hand, has made no secret of his Labour sympathies over the past few years. He must be the only pacifist chairman of a major public company and he has been an unswerving Labour loyalist.

During the 1990s he has worked tirelessly for Labour's cause and allowed his sympathies a more public airing than previously. He was a member of the Commission for Social Justice, set up by former Labour leader John Smith to examine welfare.

His openly left leanings have not prevented involvement at the highest levels of the Confederation for British Industry, the lions' den where he has carried the New Labour arguments for social justice and European integration.

Yet, so far, there has been no reward for incurring the wrath of many fellow business leaders and helping Labour build bridges with others.

Yesterday, after announcing a 7 per cent rise in profit to £128 million, in spite of a £17 million hit from milk prices, Mr Haskins was phlegmatic about the apparent snub. "It's still early days," he said, pointing out that it makes more sense for the Government to strengthen those bridges by appointing less partisan figures. But he made it clear he is ready to exchange some of his executive responsibilities in charge of Ski yoghurts, Fox's biscuits, Goodfella pizzas and supermarket ready meals for government duties

The word is he may only have a few days longer to wait for that call, but any appointment is unlikely to be headline grabbing.

Notebook

Global BA right to abandon the flag

Edited by Alex Brummer

THERE is always a great deal of scepticism when companies replace a tried and tested brand identity with a new one, especially when it costs £60 million and involves jettisoning the flag. However, in the case of British Airways, this seems to make perfect sense. Flying the flag has become an outdated concept in the increasingly liberalised, globalised airline market of the late 1990s. In many ways BA has been at the cutting edge of breaking down the bilateral barriers which have governed the global airlines business since the 1944 Chicago conference.

In Germany and France, BA is competing against domestic carriers on local routes. Through its alliance with Qantas, it has reached deep into the Pacific. And, if it eventually overcomes the regulatory barriers and is able to secure its alliance with American Airlines, the distinction between these global groups will be even more blurred, with shared computer reservation systems, codes, even ticketing.

Certainly there are aspects of BA, such as the RAF-style accents and banter, which passengers find reassuring. But these are far outweighed by the creation of a modern, cosmopolitan brand — like Virgin — which can reflect British commerce without wrapping itself in the flag. Criticism that the £60 million would be better spent on improving industrial relations or service is a red herring. Airline fleets have to be regularly painted and maintained; the current programme can be viewed as an extension of that process.

Moreover, BA, which has pioneered the concept of outsourcing in the airline industry, must be justified in choosing to put its catering out to tender. That is what other carriers have been doing, as have the new train operaters in the UK, seeking to make their menus more attractive. Aside from the "dirty tricks" episode, BA has been a glowing representative of the UK in the airline business. Quality of service and returns for shareholders are what really count.

issued by the SFA sought to introduce the concept of the reverse burden of proof, under which the senior officials at such companies as Barings would have to demonstrate their innocence or be liable to the same kind of penalties as their underlings.

This, however, produced negative vibes from some City firms, with complaints about natural justice not being observed and threats that those caught in the net might seek judicial review, delaying the speed and effectiveness of the judicial process.

Despite the criticism, the regulators have not given up on holding senior management to account for the misdeeds of convicted underlings. A new consultative paper, expected to be issued next month, will seek to ensure that the most senior managers have direct and positive responsibility for knowing what is happening in terms of risk at all levels of the business and what areas of potential difficulty have been uncovered or dealt with by enforcement officers and others.

Under such a system, managers in, say, a large insurance group would not be able to say they didn't know about pension mis-selling, nor would senior fund managers be able to ring-fence themselves from wrongdoings by the likes of Peter Young. It all seems eminently sensible, which is probably why it has never been done.

Kent's cavalry

THE arrival of former Bank of England executive director Pen Kent on the board of NatWest comes none too soon. Although the record of former Bank officials at commercial banks has not been entirely successful — Sir Kit McMahon's period at Midland comes to mind — NatWest is in need of some wise financial heads among the great and the good who grace its board. In his new role, starting in September, Mr Kent will sit on the audit and compliance committee which, with its responsibility for risk assessment, is plainly central to its operations, particularly after the interest rates swaps fiasco at NatWest markets.

At the Bank of England Kent found himself thrust into a variety of roles, including encouraging the clearing banks to take a more positive attitude towards small businesses. He was also responsible for driving the establishment of Crest — the share settlement system — after the implosion of Taurus.

The most interesting question is whether NatWest, as we know it, will still be around when Mr Kent arrives. Reports of institutional unrest and failed merger attempts with Abbey National have turned the group's shares into a market speculation, with HSBC among those rumoured as a partner. Having failed to build confidence in its investment banking expansion, its next move may well be in the consumer finance area where Lloyds TSB has established leadership.

Bosses' rights

AS THE super-SIB project team sprints towards the July deadline set by Gordon Brown the regulatory process carries on. The next major document to emanate from the SIB and the Securities and Futures Authority will deal with one of the more sensitive issues arising from the Barings scandal — the culpability of higher management. An earlier document

Multiple digits added to £15

Ian King

A PAKISTANI entrepreneur who came to Britain in 1973 with £15 in his pocket will be worth almost £50 million when the computer company he founded, Akhter Group, comes to market later this month.

Humayun Mughal, who gave the company his middle name, has a stake of about 83 per cent in Akhter, which is expected to be valued at around $60 million following flotation.

Akhter, a manufacturer of personal computers and integrated networks mainly for public sector customers, is coming to the market after years of rapid expansion.

Although the company's main customer is the Ministry of Defence and other government departments, Akhter is also active in education, which accounts for 22 per cent of its turnover, and supplies the PCs used by Open University students. The NHS is another big customer.

Mr Mughal was allowed to bring only £15 into Britain when he arrived from his home town of Sialkot, North Pakistan, due to Pakistan's tough currency controls.

After taking a number of holiday jobs, he quickly raised enough money to complete undergraduate and post-graduate electronics degrees at Liverpool University.

He then worked for ITT Components for two years before becoming frustrated with a big company set-up. He founded Akhter with his wife Yasmin, using the couple's home in Liverpool as collateral. The couple, who have seven children, still own the house for sentimental reasons.

Bank pensions row hots up

Teresa Hunter

BARCLAYS Bank faces a loss of 60,000 staff if it goes ahead with plans for a new pay system which would sharply cut employees' pensions, a banking union warned yesterday.

Unifi advised staff they would receive an enhanced pension if they left the bank now, rather than waiting for the new pay scales in July. It predicted thousands of Barclays employees would opt to go rather than see their pensions severely eroded.

Barclays has angered some staff with plans to introduce a new pay system where annual rises must be justified by improved performance. The unions claim this will amount to a "pay freeze" for 60 per cent of staff and the bank itself admits the scope for increases for employees near or at the top of their salary bands will be limited.

But the unions are alarmed at the impact on staff pensions. If an employee leaves the bank, his pension is uprated in line with the retail prices index. If he stays with the bank, his pension will be pegged to his salary.

Barclays has suggested staff contribute to one of the bank's private pension plans to make up the difference.

Unifi spokesman Graham Seddon said: "Barclays is offering us no incentive to stay. Most people joined the bank at a generally lower wage in exchange for the promise of job security and a good pension."

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.085	France 9.207	Italy 2,714	Singapore 2.277
Austria 19.24	Germany 2.732	Malta 0.612	South Afrika 7.115
Belgium 56.40	Greece 437.00	Netherlands 3.082	Spain 230.00
Canada 2.205	Hong Kong 12.29	New Zealand 2.292	Sweden 12.452
Cyprus 0.817	India 58.22	Norway 11.356	Switzerland 2.292
Denmark 10.475	Ireland 1.082	Portugal 276.25	Turkey 226,210
Finland 8.302	Israel 5.55	Saudi Arabia 8.02	USA 1.597

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

BAe steps up campaign for Euro alliance

John Glover in Milan and Simon Beavis

BRITISH Aerospace is stepping up its campaign for the creation of a European aerospace and defence concern large enough to beat off US competition, despite fears that France's new government will hamper the process.

Speaking in Rome yesterday, Peter Craine, the company's chief of European affairs, called for an alliance of France's Aérospatiale and Dassault, Germany's Dasa, Italy's Alenia and BAe, with preliminary accords in place by the end of 1998 in order to go into operation at the end of the century. The national aerospace concerns of Sweden and Spain could also take part, Mr Craine said.

BAe, which has been looking worriedly at the defence and aerospace conglomerates being created in the US defence industry, is not new to calls of this type. But for the first time a senior company executive has given details of the sort of corporate structure BAe would like to see and put a timetable on it.

Mr Craine, who emphasised that this was not an anti-American move, called for the new company to have a single management and widely spread shareholding structure, perhaps with limits of 8-16 per cent on the size of single stakes, a ban on deals between shareholders and "golden shares" to be held by participating governments, for use only in the event of a threat to national security.

The new company would operate in four sectors, he said — civil and military aviation, weapons, and systems integration, with centres of excellence in each of the participating countries. The civil aviation sector could be formed out of the company that evolves from the Airbus consortium.

"We have long maintained that we want to see a European aerospace and defence firm created. We're very keen for the debate to get going and this is a model we have put forward to be discussed," said Loxley Ryan of BAe.

The news comes a day after it emerged that BAe was open to restarting talks with GEC about a merger. The reports sent GEC shares up 18.5p to 354.5p yesterday, despite evidence that BAe's enthusiasm for a tie up is not matched inside GEC.

Lord Weinstock, GEC's chairman emeritus, is understood to argue that US competition and concerns about the British Government's attitude towards arms sales make this the wrong time for defence-sector expansion.

Gateway to Europe . . . Sheffield City Airport, which opened yesterday, is the UK's first new regional airport for 50 years. Designed for business travellers, the airport has been built with £6 million of private funds, with Europe contributing a further £6 million for a road link to the M1 PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

CBI backs tax rise to cool the economy

Charlotte Denny

INDUSTRY leaders yesterday pressed the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to take the steam out of consumer spending with a £2 billion rise in personal taxes in his July 2 Budget.

The Confederation of British Industry believes "modest" tax rises are necessary to prevent inflationary pressures emerging. "We must not risk an unwelcome return to the 'boom and bust' of the past," Adair Turner, the CBI director general said.

The CBI fears that, with £35 billion due to land in consumers' pockets from building society windfalls, the Bank of England could ratchet up interest rates to 7.5 per cent by the end of the year unless the Chancellor puts the brakes on consumer spending.

Mr Turner, introducing the CBI's Budget submission, said that relying solely on interest rates to curb demand could drive up sterling at a time when the high pound was hurting the UK's export performance.

The £2 billion figure was lower than the CBI had originally estimated would be necessary to slow down the economy. "Recent economic data have pointed to slower than anticipated retail sales growth and pleasant inflation surprises in retailing, manufacturing and the labour market."

The CBI is calling on the Chancellor to concentrate tax rises on households not companies. "Business sector tax increases would not serve the purpose of dampening consumer demand. A modest but noticeable increase in personal taxation should dampen consumers' enthusiasm."

Mr Turner said that personal tax rises should be spread around to minimise the impact on any one sector of the economy. The CBI, therefore, does not support completely abolishing mortgage interest relief (Miras) which would raise about £2 billion.

The CBI also opposes abolishing tax credits on share dividends. "Such a move would raise money at the expense of both business and shareholders, cutting funds available for investment." Mr Turner said, though he accepted the case for reviewing the relationships between coporate, savings and pensions taxes.

Boeing raises trade war stakes

Julie Wolf in Brussels and Mark Tran in New York

THE prospect of a trade war between Europe and the US over Boeing's planned $14 billion merger with McDonnell Douglas increased last night after Boeing clinched its third exclusive order with an American airline.

The world's leading aircraft manufacturer gained the $3 billion-plus order from Continental to buy 35 wide-body jets and make the company its sole supplier for the next 20 years. The deal involved the hefty discounts which have already provoked Airbus and EU anger in Boeing deals with American and Delta Airlines.

Airbus, Boeing's European arch-rival, said the deal with Continental was anti-competitive and potentially harmful for the industry by handcuffing the airline for 20 years.

With the European Commission due to hear evidence tomorrow and on Friday from Boeing and McDonnell Douglas on their merger, an Airbus spokesman said: "If it [the Continental sale] materialises, it can only add one more element to our worries".

Competition commissioner Karel van Miert has voiced objections that the merger would strengthen Boeing's dominant market position.

But a commission decision to block the deal could provoke a trade dispute with the US. American politicians have warned Mr Van Miert not to take a political decision based on concerns about the future of Airbus.

Boeing already has a 60 per cent share of the world market for commercial aircraft. Should United and Northwest emulate American, Delta and Continental, Airbus would be almost locked out of the American market.

Boeing's move comes as experts estimate world airlines will order more than 13,500 aircraft over the next 20 years.

Moscow Narodny confirms Bank of England is investigating suspected £6m fraud

Russians sound alarm

Ian King

MOSCOW Narodny Bank, the former finance arm of the Soviet Union, admitted last night that it had called in Bank of England inspectors to investigate a $10 million (£6 million) potential fraud detected by its internal systems.

But Moscow Narodny, which also confirmed that one of its banking officers is on paid leave pending the outcome of the investigation, insisted that it would have been the victim of any potential fraud.

Moscow Narodny said in a statement that it had detected the potential fraud in mid-April and reported the matter to the Bank of England immediately.

It said that it had also launched an internal investigation to establish the circumstances surrounding the potential fraud.

At the same time, Moscow Narodny said it had advised the appropriate criminal authorities and had launched commercial litigation for recovery of the amounts owing.

The announcement follows yesterday's Guardian report that a nine-strong team of inspectors from the Bank of England, thought to be receiving assistance from an outside accounting firm, was looking into Moscow Narodny's trade finance department under section 39 of the Banking Act.

However, Moscow Narodny insisted last night that there was no crisis at the bank and it ruled out any potential derivatives losses of the kind that brought Barings to its knees more than two years ago.

It also insisted that the staff member suspended, who has not been named, had not been implicated in the alleged fraud in any way.

Derek Farmer, Moscow Narodny's general manager, added: "MNB continues to perform well and last year we recorded profits in excess of £40 million.

"The bank's internal systems detected this potential fraud, and, following normal City practice, we reported it to the Bank of England.

"In line with standard procedure, the Bank of England has commissioned a report by external accountants into MNB's systems and controls."

Sources close to Moscow Narodny said last night that the customer involved in the transactions under investigation is a privately owned US food manufacturer.

It is believed that Moscow Narodny was alerted to the alleged fraud when bank staff involved in providing trade finance facilities to the company — which was dealing in frozen chickens and turkeys — paid a visit to their client.

When the bank officials arrived at a warehouse where the poultry was supposedly kept, they found that it was empty.

Although it is majority-owned by the Russian Central Bank and many of its key staff are Russian nationals, Moscow Narodny is officially licensed and recognised as a British bank, and accordingly is regulated by the Bank of England.

Section 39 allows the Bank of England — which is soon to hand over banking supervision to the new "super SIB" — to demand documents and information from the organisation being investigated and, if necessary, to demand that the institution produce a report by an accountant on any related matter.

The investigation comes at a time when London's financial regulators, including the Bank of England, are growing increasingly concerned about the tide of Russian business which is pouring into the City of London.

Renault boss climbs down

Vilvorde's workers will find if factory can be saved, write **Paul Webster** in Paris and **Julie Wolf** in Brussels

RENAULT chairman Louis Schweitzer yesterday climbed down over a decision to close the Vilvorde factory in Belgium and appointed an independent expert to see if the plant could be saved.

Mr Schweitzer, who once declared his decision was irrevocable, told shareholders in Paris that the expert would decide by the end of the month whether the plant could be kept in production or whether money would have to be invested to bring replacement heavy industry into the town near Brussels — the constituency of Belgian prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene.

His decision came as representatives of the 3,100 workers joined in a street protest through Paris after talks between the socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin, and Mr Dehaene, in which the French government said it would put pressure on Renault, which is 46 per cent state-owned.

The three-month dispute sparked off the first European strike, with support from factory workers in France and Spain. In April, the Socialist Party publicly congratulated tribunals in Belgium and France which forcibly suspended the closure and during the election campaign Mr Jospin shared a platform in Lille with Vilvorde protesters and promised he would act urgently to reverse Mr Schweitzer's initiative.

Last night the European Commission, which has accused Renault of flouting EU rules requiring consultation with employees about plant closures, said Mr Schweitzer's decision went in the right direction. "There are procedures aimed at alleviating the social impact of closures and Renault ignored all of that," a spokeswoman said.

French junior industry minister Christian Pierret said the government was happy there would be an objective study of Renault's decision.

Mr Schweitzer will now have to rethink plans to offset Renault's 1996 deficit of 5.2 billion francs (£550 million), which will probably worsen this year because of falling sales. Vilvorde's closure was part of a Fr20 billion cost-cutting exercise, but some of the money will now have to be spent on an improved compensation programme or new investment on the car site if the car assembly plant is closed.

TEACHERS' BUILDING SOCIETY

All enquiries to: ALLENVIEW HOUSE, HANHAM ROAD, WIMBORNE, DORSET BH21 1AG Tel: (01202) 881771 / 641548

NOTICE TO INVESTORS

The following Gross Interest Rates are applicable from 1st June 1997

†MINISTER 30	
£40,000+	7.00%
£5,000+	5.20%
MINISTER KEYMASTER (Home Payment Monthly Savings Account)	6.50%
MINISTER 90	5.80%
†MINISTER SPIRE	
£40,000+	5.55%
£20,000+	5.00%
£5,000+	4.65%
£1,000+	4.20%
MINISTER MONTHLY	
£40,000+	5.40%
£20,000+	4.90%
£5,000+	4.60%
†BULLION	5.30%
†THREE YEAR FIXED TERM	4.50%
†FIVE YEAR FIXED TERM	1.25%
†MONTHLY CONTRACT	1.15%
†EXTRA ORDINARY	0.70%

*The Gross Rate is the contractual rate of interest, payable net taking account of the deduction of income tax at the appropriate rate.
† Closed to new investors.
Member of the Building Societies Association and the Building Societies Ombudsman Scheme

News in brief

Zeneca threatens ICI with legal action

PHARMACEUTICAL group Zeneca yesterday threatened to take legal action against its former parent company ICI over the chemical company's £1 billion flotation of its Australian arm.

Zeneca wants the company to acknowledge its "clear legal rights" to acquire the Australian firm's pharmaceutical business if ownership changes. It is also threatening to terminate agreements with ICI Australia to distribute its agrochemicals, pharmaceuticals and some speciality chemicals.

ICI Australia, which is 63 per cent owned by the UK's ICI, is due to be floated off as a separate entity in July. — *Julia Finch*

Amersham international link

HEALTH and technology group Amersham International has confirmed it is to merge its life sciences division with the biotech arm of the Swedish-American drugs company Pharmacia & Upjohn. The new company, to be called Amersham Pharmacia Biotech, will be the world's biggest supplier of biomedical research equipment, with sales of £430 million, 3,600 employees and an annual £40 million R&D budget.

Amersham, which will have 55 per cent of the company, said 360 job losses were likely worldwide and it expected savings of £30 million a year by 2000. The new company will have its head office in Uppsala, Sweden. Amersham and Pharmacia & Upjohn have agreed to prepare the new company for flotation by 2000 or full Amersham takeover by 2004. Details of the merger were announced as Amersham reported profits up 30 per cent to nearly £66 million last year. — *Julia Finch*

Chile waters down whisky tax

THE price of whisky in Chile will fall over the next three years under new laws which will tax all spirits according to alcohol content. The law, due to be passed next month, will see taxes fall from a maximum of 70 per cent to between 27 per cent and 47 per cent and will raise the tax on pisco, a local liquor derived from grapes, from the current maximum of 35 per cent. The European Community alleged that Chile's liquor taxes discriminate against whisky to the advantage of pisco and threatened to take its complaint to the World Trade Organization. — *Tony May*

STV brings Grampian into fold

SCOTTISH Media Group, which owns Scottish Television in central Scotland and The Herald newspaper in Glasgow, confirmed yesterday that it was buying Grampian Television for £105.4 million. The deal at 320p a share brings the neighbouring TV territories together and represents a premium of 22 per cent on the Grampian share price on May 30. — *Tony May*

Red carpet for Harris son

LORD Harris's Carpetright floor-coverings group has appointed Martin Harris as marketing director. Mr Harris, 28, Lord Harris's youngest son, joined the company in 1991 soon after leaving college in the US and has recently been developing a new format for the group's carpet depot operation. His older brother, Peter, works at Carpetright as a merchandise administrator.

Baroness Wilcox is joining the group as a non-executive director. — *Tony May*

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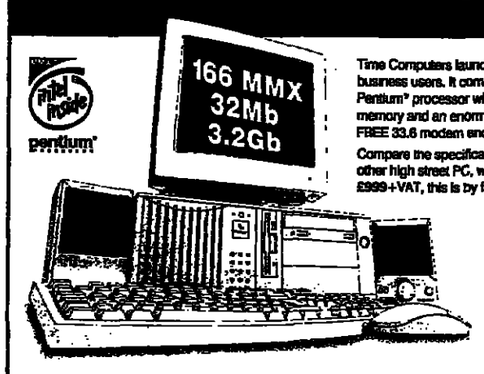

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هكذا من الاصل

Racing

Stevens jockeying for position at Royal Ascot

Chris Hawkins

BRITISH racegoers will be privileged to see one of the world's great jockeys in action in the next few days when Gary Stevens comes over from America to ride at Sandown on Saturday and Royal Ascot next week.

Stevens, 34, has ridden more than 4,000 winners in the States and last weekend failed by half a length to land the American Triple Crown when Silver Charm (by Silver Hawk, the same sire as Benny the Dip) was caught by Touch Gold at Belmont Park.

He has won the Kentucky Derby three times and has four Breeders' Cup winners to his name.

Stevens is expected to ride mainly for Michael Tabor at the Royal meeting, but is bound to pick up several other mounts and has already been booked by trainer John Gosden for Almaty in the King's Stand Stakes.

"To me Royal Ascot is the greatest race meeting in the world," said Stevens. "It will be an honour to ride there and an education."

This will not be his first visit to this country, however, as 10 years ago he had two rides at Newmarket and was later offered a job by Andre Fabre to ride in France, which he declined.

More recently he said no when offered the ride on Singspiel in the Dubai World Cup, a decision which let in his rival, Jerry Bailey, to secure a second successive win in the race.

"I still feel a fool for what happened in Dubai," commented Stevens. "We all make mistakes, but I had some very good business at home and didn't feel Singspiel would handle the dirt.

"But I will be relying on my relationship with Michael Stoute, Michael Tabor and Sheikh Mohammed to pick up rides at Royal Ascot.

"I planned to come last year, but a shoulder injury got in the way. I have always said I would like to spend a lengthy spell in Europe before my career is over."

Clive Brittain has typically been quick off the mark and booked Stevens to ride Luso for him in Sunday's Gran Premio di Milano.

Brittain, who has saddled 13 Royal Ascot winners, plans to run his Italian and German Guineas winner, Air Express, in the St James's Palace Stakes next Tuesday.

Air Express is rated a 20-1 chance but this does not deter Brittain who said: "He has a serious chance. He ran against the best and was not quite good enough last year, but he has improved a lot from two to three and between his last two races."

The St James's Palace is usually the jewel in the crown of the Royal meeting and the Aga Khan's Daylami, winner of the French Guineas, has been installed 9-4 favourite by Ladbrokes. The Irish Guineas winner, Desert King, is at 5-2 followed by Poteen, third to Entrepreneur in the 2,000 at Newmarket, at 4-1 with Zamindar at 5-1 and Starborough on 6's.

Wednesday's Royal Hunt Cup is the major betting event of the week and Luca Cumani's Crown Court has been all the rage, being backed from 20-1 to 12-1 with Hill's, who have the Victoria Cup-winner, Tregaron, 10-1 favourite.

Cumani, trainer of Poteen, has a reputation for being a big handicap specialist, but the Hunt Cup does not number among his nine Royal Ascot winners. Crown Court has had only one run this season when a promising second at Lingfield last month.

At Salisbury this afternoon, Ned's Bonanza (2.50), from the in-form stable of Michael Dods, is napped in the Amber Trust Handicap. He ran encouragingly when third to Mungo Park from a poor draw at Carlisle last week and is now off a mark of 52 compared to 57 when he last won a year ago.

Luca Cumani . . . Hunt Cup challenge with Crown Court

Newmarket tonight

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
6.40	Polyphony	Desert Dunes
7.10	Dantordin	Mamora Bay
7.40	Octavia Hill	Sharp 'n' Shady
8.10	Yet Again	Fairy Knight
8.40	Mo-Addab	Mo-Addab
9.10	High Intrigue	Seattle Art

July Course, 2m1f with right-hand bend at halfway. Straight mile.
Going: Good (straight mile), rest good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Draw: No advantage.
Long distance travellers: Hurgill Lady (7.40) J Watts, N Yorks 205 miles. Ordained (8.10) & Soez Tornado (8.40) E Alston, Lancs 200 miles. Smart Spirit (8.40) Mrs Rowley, Cleveland 200 miles.
Seven day winners: 7.40 Molly Music; 8.10 Cottage Prince.
Blinkered first time: 6.40 Polyphony. Visored: None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J.Jumps.

6.40 JUPITER LIMITED STAKES
1m 7f £3,558 (6 declared)

1 (7) 3201-0 Chieftain Island (49) C British 9-9-10 ..... S Boyle
2 (2) 4450-2 Desert Dunes (28) M Graham 4-9-10 ..... S Cochrane
3 (6) 055 Translate (23) M Stoute 4-9-10 ..... J Quinn
4 (5) 00-421 Pika Creek (28) I Balding 4-9-7 ..... W Ryan
5 (3) 214 Polyphony (18) R Charlton 3-8-6 ..... Pat Eddery ★
6 (4) 0-64 Whirlwhistle (23) E Dunlop 3-8-4 ..... D O'Donohoe (3)

Betting: 5-2 Polyphony, 3-1 Desert Dunes, 7-2 Whirlwhistle, 4-1 Pika Creek, 8-1 Chieftain Island, 20-1 Translate

7.10 DAILY TELEGRAPH MAIDEN AUCTION STAKES 2YO
6f £3,753 (10 declared)

1 (1) Armack Cay D Loder 8-10 ..... G Duffield
2 (3) 0 Gift of Gold (18) I Campbell 8-10 ..... R Price
3 (8) Little Indian S Woods 8-10 ..... W Ryan
4 (10) Aldwych Arrow M Bell 8-7 ..... M Roberts
5 (2) Bells of Aire R Boss 8-7 ..... L Dettori
6 (5) Brookhouse D Elsworth 8-7 ..... R Cochrane
7 (6) Dantordie J Eustace 8-7 ..... J Tate
8 (7) Linden Heights L Cumani 8-7 ..... Pat Eddery
9 (4) 4 Ringleader (12) P Cole 8-7 ..... J Quinn
10 (9) 36 Mamora Bay (44) M Tompkins 8-5 ..... D Biggs

Betting: 4-6 Armack Cay, 6-1 Linden Heights, 8-1 Mamora Bay, Ringleader, 12-1 Aldwych Arrow, Brookhouse, 14-1 Bells of Aire

7.40 NGK SPARK PLUGS FILLIES' HANDICAP
7f £3,948 (11 declared)

1 (6) 30264- Badger Bay (298) C Dwyer 4-9-12 ..... J Stack
2 (5) 053-04 Sharp 'n' Shady (18) C Wall 4-9-7 ..... Pat Eddery
3 (9) 060-02 Octavia Hill (18) P Harris 4-8-6 ..... G Parker ★
4 (4) 2620-0 Hurgill Lady (27) J Watts 3-9-4 ..... L Dettori
5 (2) 00 00 Ella Lennox (25) W Muston 3-9-4 ..... K Fallon
6 (7) 0-6321 Molly Music (6) (BF) and C Morgenroth 3-9-2 ..... D Biggs
7 (10) 04-000 Posh A Venture (19) S Woods 3-8-9 ..... W Ryan
8 (1) 43-00 Night (22) N Graham 3-8-8 ..... R Cochrane
9 (2) 0260- Gossiel (305) K Mahdi 3-8-1 ..... J Quinn
10 (11) 4000-0 Bear To Dance (16) P Howling 4-7-13 ..... N Mallon (5)
11 (3) 0-404 La Chaloupiere (9) G Lewis 3-7-12 ..... R Pimlock (9)

Betting: 3-1 Sharp 'N' Shady, 9-2 Molly Music, 6-1 Badger Bay, 8-1 Octavia Hill, Posh A Venture, Hurgill Lady, 12-1 Night, La Chaloupiere

8.10 ESSEX CUP HANDICAP
1m 4f £4,045 (15 declared)

1 (3) 26-045 Ancient Quest (14) M Callaghan 4-10-0 ..... Paul Eddery
2 (1) 002150 Fairy Knight (9) (D) R Hannon 5-9-13 ..... Pat Eddery
3 (11) -00492 Swiss Hunter (18) D Cosgrove 4-9-12 ..... M Rimmer
4 (13) 60-035 Lexicographermaster (31) (CD) (BF) Bob Jones 9-9-8 ..... W Ryan
5 (2) 0620-0 Unbelievable (19) J Wharton 4-9-4 ..... K Fallon
6 (8) 20-155 What A Fuss (23) B Hanbury 4-8-9 ..... W Carson
7 (10) 0045-0 Admirals Secret (9) (D) C Wall 5-8-11 ..... R Cochrane
8 (9) 000-32 Ordained (9) E Alston 4-9-0 ..... J F Egan
9 (5) 0000-0 Formidable Flame (25) W Muston 4-8-11 ..... R Cochrane
10 (4) 43-53 Dancing Queen (15) M Bell 3-8-10 ..... M Fenton
11 (15) 2-30 Venture Connect (105) C Brooks 3-8-8 ..... R Perham
12 (7) 3-0101 Cottage Prince (5) (48s ex) (D) J J Quinn 4-8-8 ..... L Dettori
13 (12) 60-0 Mountain Jamaica (20) E Dunlop 3-8-5 ..... D O'Donohoe (3)
14 (14) 00-000 Slapy Dam (4) (D) C Smith 5-8-5 ..... A Culhane ★
15 (6) -11614 Yet Again (6) (BF) Coy Galloway 5-8-3 ..... S Sanders

Betting: 9-2 Cottage Prince, 11-2 Yet Again, 7-1 Swiss Hunter, Fairy Knight, 8-1 Ancient Quest, Dancing Queen, 10-1 Lexicographeranbow, Ordained

8.40 SPORT OF KINGS TOUR HANDICAP
1m £3,818 (11 declared)

1 (5) 0020-1 Mo-Addab (16) (D) A Stewart 7-9-12 ..... M Roberts
2 (4) 142-03 Night Tune (21) (C) B Hanbury 3-9-5 ..... J Stack
3 (7) 2-6040 Tart (11) J Pearce 4-9-5 ..... C Teague (3)
4 (2) 004044 Suez Tornado (9) (D) E Alston 4-9-13 ..... J F Egan ★
5 (6) 02122- Juliette Mia (233) (BD) W Mair 3-9-13 ..... W Carson
6 (1) 300-10 Janie's Boy (18) (D) Mrs J Cecil 3-8-12 ..... R Cochrane
7 (3) 030-20 Smart Spirit (27) Mrs M Rowley 3-8-10 ..... A Culhane
8 (9) 0-5050 Saltando (11) (D) Pat Mitchell 6-8-7 ..... Martin Dwyer (3) ★
9 (5) 05-004 Gain Line (14) Bob Jones 4-8-5 ..... N Day
10 (11) 0000-0 Deanna (25) (CD) C Brittain 5-8-0 ..... J Lowe
11 (10) 2000-0 Comic Hill (18) (D) J Pearce 6-7-10 ..... S Sanders

Betting: 3-1 Mo-Addab, 9-2 Juliette Mia, 6-1 Night Tune, Janie's Boy, 7-1 Smart Spirit, 10-1 Suez Tornado, Saltando

9.10 VENUS MAIDEN STAKES 3YO
1m 4f £3,850 (9 declared)

1 (3) 0 Alice Rose (36) A Stewart 9-0 ..... M Roberts
2 (8) 0 Badge of Fame (25) L Cumani 9-0 ..... R Hills (3)
3 (4) 000- Hadlet (224) D Morley 9-0 ..... S Carter
4 (6) 6- High Intrigue (238) H Cecil 9-0 ..... W Ryan
5 (1) Prince Alex A Stewart 9-0 ..... D Harrison
6 (9) 0- Seattle Art (224) H Cecil 9-0 ..... K Fallon
7 (7) Zarpour L Cumani 9-0 ..... G Duffield
8 (2) 4- Lilire (246) J Gosden 8-9 ..... L Dettori
9 (5) Venus Cliquot R Armstrong 8-9 ..... R Price

Betting: 3-1 Lilire, 7-2 Seattle Art, 11-2 High Intrigue, 7-1 Zarpour, 8-1 Prince Alex, Venus Cliquot

Salisbury runners and riders

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.20	Dodo	——
2.50	Ned's Bonanza (nap)	Ned's Bonanza
3.20	Delight Of Dawn	Sharp Imp
3.50	Winter Garden	Winter Garden
4.20	Khetaaeq	Mr Sponge
4.50	Love Has No Pride	Motet

Right-handed loop course with 7f run-in. Mile course bears right after three furlongs.
Going: Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Draw: Low numbers favoured in sprints when going is soft.
Long distance travellers: Ned's Bonanza (2.50) M Dods, County Durham 265 miles. Tycooness (3.50) M Johnston, N Yorks 264 miles. Motet (4.50) G Wragg, Newmarket 151 miles. Winter Garden (3.50) & Scoss (4.50) L Cumani, Newmarket 151 miles. Sharp Imp (3.20) R Flower, E Sussex 110 miles.
Seven day winners: 2.50 Littlestone Rocket.
Blinkered first time: None. Visored: None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J.Jumps.

2.20 EBF WHITEPARISH FILLIES' STAKES 2YO
5f £3,256 (9 declared)

1 (6) Desert Lady R Charlton 8-8 ..... T Sprake
2 (3) Dodo D Elsworth 8-8 ..... Pat Eddery
3 (8) Jonathan's Girl J Bridger 8-8 ..... A Daly (5)
4 (5) Kiwadil P Waluyo 8-8 ..... R Price
5 (7) Midsummer Night R Hannon 8-8 ..... Dane O'Neill
6 (4) • Noble Lass I Balding 8-8 ..... M Hills
7 (2) Sabre Girl R Hannon 8-8 ..... R Perham
8 (1) Saliga H Morrison 8-8 ..... C Rutter
9 (9) 05 Universal Lady (19) C James 8-8 ..... J Reid

Betting: 7-2 Dodo, 4-1 Midsummer Night, 6-1 Desert Lady, Kiwadil, 7-1 Robin Lane, 8-1 Sabre Girl, 10-1 Universal Lady

2.50 AMBER TRUST HANDICAP
5f £2,898 (12 declared)

1 (11) -04050 Friendly Brave (49) (D) (BF) Gay Kelleway 7-10-0 ..... R Hughes
2 (10) 0001-0 High Dolcade (47) (CD) J Spearing 6-9-12 ..... S Drowne
3 (4) 00-040 Sharp Stack (9) R Hodges 4-9-7 ..... Sophie Mitchell
4 (3) 0000-0 Macgillycuddy (16) (D) Mrs P Dutfield 8-9-6 T Quinn (5) ★
5 (1) 40-641 Lucky Dip (12) (D) D Elsworth 3-9-5 ..... J Reid
6 (9) 0-0003 Bell's Bonanza (53) (D) M Dods 8-9-10 ..... A Clark
7 (2) 40303 Brunswick (13) (D) S McGrath 5-9-10 ..... G Baker
8 (8) 00-002 The Flapjack (14) P Mitchell 4-9-8 ..... A Whelan (3)
9 (6) 00-001 Red Time (5) M Saunders 4-9-5 ..... Claire Angell
10 (12) 600301 Littlestone Rocket (7) (48s ex) (D) W Muir 3-8-7 ..... Dane O'Neill ★
11 (5) 000-0 Persistence To Breeze (23) B Millman 3-8-3 ..... T Sprake
12 (7) 0-0302 Chief's Lady (9) J Bradley 5-7-10 ..... F Norton

Betting: 9-2 Lucky Dip, 6-1 Ned's Bonanza, Barcarol, 7-1 Littlestone Rocket, 8-1 Friendly Brave, Chief's Lady, 10-1 High Dolcade, The Flapjack

3.20 BOLLINGER CHAMPAGNE AMATEUR HANDICAP
7f £2,882 (12 declared)

1 (7) -30-048 White Settler (16) (D) R Hodges 4-12-0 ..... J Tizzard
2 (5) 1-1131 Mr Benvenuto (110) (D) G L Moore 7-11-10 ..... I Mongan (4)
3 (8) 3430-4 Monsoon (18) (CD) M Channon 5-11-5 ..... R Thornton
4 (3) -65422 Sharp Imp (13) (D) (BF) R Flower 7-11-5 ..... T McCarthy ★

5 (10) 0-5450 Polster (18) (CD) Mrs P Dutfield 5-11-4 ..... L Dettori
6 (12) 014-00 Savage (16) (D) R Hannon 3-11-4 ..... C Wiggs
7 (2) 0-4000 Blue Viking (12) A P Jones 3-10-10 ..... J Goldstein (4)
8 (6) 0-0003 Delight Of Dawn (7) (D) E Wheeler 5-10-6 ..... J Bosley (4)
9 (11) 0500-0 Caberdwbla (18) G Balding 4-10-2 ..... K Gaskin
10 (4) (23235 Justkissme (13) J Bridger 5-10-2 ..... D Bridger (4)
11 (1) 65-000 Fully Foot Frost (12) B Millman 3-9-11 ..... L Dettori (4)
12 (9) 00-000 Severn Mill (15) J Bradley 8-9-7 ..... S Dansell (4)

Betting: 4-1 Mr Benvenuto, 9-2 Sharp Imp, 7-1 White Settler, Monsoon, 8-1 Polster, Silver Lining, 12-1 Savage, Delight Of Dawn, Justkissme

3.50 BISHOPSTONE CONDITIONS STAKES 3YO
1m 6f £4,519 (5 declared)

1 (1) 0-512 Winter Garden (25) (BF) L Cumani 9-2 ..... L Dettori
2 (5) 020-03 Fletcher (27) H Morrison 8-11 ..... R Hughes
3 (4) 32 Thopia (16) (BF) I Balding 8-11 ..... M Hills
4 (2) 6 Fabrys Quest (9) J S Moore 8-8 ..... J Reid
5 (3) Tycooness M Johnston 8-3 ..... J Fanning

Betting: 4-6 Winter Garden, 9-4 Thopia, 6-1 Tycooness, 12-1 Fletcher, 25-1 Fabrys Quest

4.20 FONTHILL STUD & SUMMERDOWN STABLES MAIDEN STAKES 3YO
7f £3,691 (10 declared)

1 (1) 5 Belladrum (19) R Hannon 9-0 ..... Dane O'Neill
2 (8) 20 Elba (11) J Poulton 9-0 ..... S Drowne
3 (9) 0-053 Khaleeg (27) (BF) W Haggas 9-0 ..... T Sprake
4 (6) 9 Hilden Boy (14) A P Jones 9-0 ..... R Price
5 (2) Mellitus Lady Herries 9-0 ..... M Hills
6 (3) 3 Mr Sponge (11) I Balding 8-9 ..... L Dettori
7 (7) 0- Shades of Love (215) Y Cosse 8-9 ..... C Rutter
8 (4) 5 Yes Sir (30) K Mahdi 8-9 ..... J Reid
9 (5) 0-8 Elba (144) Lord Huntingdon 8-9 ..... Pat Eddery
10 (10) 6-0 Over The Moon (27) M F Gorley 8-9 ..... F Norton

Betting: 13-8 Khaleeg, 7-2 Mr Sponge, 7-1 Mellitus, 8-1 Elba, 10-1 Belladrum, 14-1 Verdi, Over The Moon

4.50 BARFORD ST. MARTIN LIMITED STAKES
1m 2f £3,574 (7 declared)

1 (5) 05200- Bellflash (268) R Phillips 4-9-6 ..... R Hughes
2 (1) 4500-0 Lumberjo (16) V Soane 4-9-6 ..... C Rutter
3 (3) 30-030 Medieval Lady (24) I Balding 4-9-3 ..... J Reid
4 (4) 3-1 Motet (78) (D) G Wragg 3-8-6 ..... M Hills
5 (2) 621 Scoss (12) (D) L Cumani 3-8-9 ..... Pat Eddery
6 (6) -35364 Carlye Quest (6) J Neville 3-8-7 ..... A Mackenzie
7 (7) -20404 Love Has No Pride (14) R Hannon 3-8-7 ..... Dane O'Neill

Betting: 11-8 Motet, 5-2 Scoss, 9-2 Love Has No Pride, 9-1 Carlye Quest, 12-1 Medieval Lady, 20-1 Bellflash, Lumberjo

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
L Dettori	24	98	24.5	+41.41
Pat Eddery	23	110	20.9	-7.35
T Quinn	22	148	14.9	-42.38
J Reid	22	156	13.9	-29.17
Dane O'Neill	14	86	16.9	-1.74
R Hughes	12	83	14.5	-17.56
M Hills	10	59	16.9	+18.50

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
B Hanson	39	303	12.9	-37.86
I A Balding	14	103	13.6	-35.26
Ld Huntingdon	13	54	24.1	+33.42
B Charlton	11	72	15.3	-25.55
B R C Elsworth	10	103	9.73	-30.50
R Hannon	9	137	5.83	-93.10
L M Cumani	7	28	2583	+2.25

Yarmouth seven-race card

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.10	Aurelian	Jocinda
2.40	Shawdon	Shawdon
3.10	Venture Capitalist	Venture Capitalist
3.40	Lashaan	Lashaan (nb)
4.10	Double Oscar	Don Pepe
4.40	Tiffacar	Tiffacar
5.10	Princess Of Hearts	Top Shelf

Left-handed, oval track of 1m5f with 5f run-in. Straight mile.
Going: Firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Draw: No advantage.
Long distance travellers: Princess of Hearts (5.10) M Pipe, Devon 291 miles. Flirtina (3.40) P Evans, Powys 242 miles. As-Is (2.10) & Cambridge Ball (5.10) M Johnston, N Yorks 219 miles.
Seven day winners: 2.10 Eponina.
Blinkered first time: 2.10 Machille. Visored: 3.40 The Hobby Lobby.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J.Jumps.

2.10 CHARTER HANDICAP 3YO
1m 6f £3,018 (10 declared)

1 (5) -00341 Epsolon (6) (58s ex) (D) M Channon 9-9 ..... J F Egan
2 (7) 044418 Squire Castle (15) (D) D Chapman 5-11-13 ..... Miss S Clark
3 (10) 501-54 Richard Key (15) (CD) D Haydn Jones 4-11-12 ..... J Jones
4 (9) 000498 Insider Trader (7) (D) (BF) Miss J Rowsden 6-11-4 ..... Miss E Rowsden (5) ★
5 (8) 111405 Johayro (17) (D) J Goldie 4-11-3 ..... R Dale
6 (13) 336420 Tropical Beach (9) (CD) (BF) J Berry 4-11-2 ..... Miss L Pearce
7 (1) -05100 Leading Princess (21) (CD) Miss L Perratt 5-10-5 ..... Miss A L Backhouse (7) ★
8 (17) 000-05 King Of Shiver (27) (D) R Allan 8-10-8 ..... V Lukaniuk (5) ★
9 (6) 6-4065 Ashfiends (12) (D) J Hetherton 4-10-4 ..... J A Stack
10 (15) 335130 Inspirit (68) (CD) T Etherington 3-10-4 ..... Miss A Elsey
11 (14) 000-43 Pallione (8) (D) D Nolan 9-9-13 ..... Miss J Allen
12 (16) 0-6250 Sunday Mail Too (8) (CD) Miss L Perratt 5-9-11 ..... Miss B Sanderson (5)
13 (8) 4000-0 Sundora (8) (C) J Goldie 7-9-10 ..... D McPhail (5)
14 (7) -00000 Mister Westwood (12) (D) (BF) Miss L Perratt 5-9-7 ..... D S Shaw (7) ★
15 (12) 6-0006 Shot (8) (CD) Miss L Perratt 11-9-7 ..... B Bennett (7) ★
16 (9) 46000- Starlane Harry (268) (CD) R McKellar 5-9-7 ..... Miss A Bissill (5) ★
17 (11) 000-0 Hildas Man (11) D Nolan 6-9-7 ..... Miss S Wilkinson (7)

Betting: 7-2 Insider Trader, 7-1 Just Bob, Tropical Beach, 8-1 Pallion, 10-1 Squire Corrie, Natural Key, Johayro, Leading Princess

2.40 EBF RIVER BURE AUCTION STAKES 2YO
6f £3,210 (5 declared)

1 (2) 01 Shawdon (25) (D) M Prescott 9-4 ..... S Sanders
2 (3) 8 Fred's In The Know (39) C Mackay 8-12 ..... Nicola Howarth
3 (4) Great Melody J Eustace 8-12 ..... R Cochrane
4 (1) Up The Wall I Campbell 8-12 ..... S Raymond
5 (5) Jon'chiller' C Dwyer 8-7 ..... M Worrey

Betting: 1-3 Shawdon, 7-1 Great Melody, 10-1 Up The Wall, Jon'chiller', 20-1 Fred's In The Know

3.10 RADIO NORFOLK CONDITIONS STAKES
6f £4,768 (4 declared)

1 (1) 660000 Spanish Skipper (6) (D) M Chapman 8-9-0 ..... D O'Shea
2 (4) 300-53 Venture Capitalist (53) (D) (BF) D Nicholls 9-9-0 ..... Alex Greaves
3 (3) 20-130 Saltah (10) P Walwyn 3-8-10 ..... D Holland
4 (2) 468-40 Johnny Staccato (18) (D) J Eustace 3-8-8 ..... R Cochrane

Betting: 4-7 Venture Capitalist, 5-2 Hatah, 7-1 Johnny Staccato, 33-1 Spanish Skipper

3.40 TOLLHOUSE SELLING STAKES 2YO
7f £2,181 (7 declared)

1 (4) 14 Lashaan (18) N Callaghan 9-2 ..... W Ryan
2 (6) Sick As A Parrot C Dwyer 8-11 ..... J Stack

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
M Hills	26	195	16.6	-0.60
L Dettori	25	127	19.7	-43.41
W Ryan	22	118	18.6	-18.13
Pat Eddery	17	79	21.5	-26.55
K Darley	15	61	24.6	+15.49
R Cochrane	15	84	16	+15.88

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
G E Brittain	21	147	14.3	+50.45
J H M Gosden	17	87	19.5	-14.17
M Bell	14	76	18.4	+4.65
J R Fanshawe	11	78	14.5	-31.27
M W Tompkins	10	111	9.9	-25.38
B Hanbury	9	63	14.3	-17.47
M Johnston	8	36	22.2	+8.58

4.10 POTTER HEIGHAM HANDICAP
6f £2,914 (8 declared)

1 (1) 5-0104 Prime Silk (103) (CD) M Ryan 6-10-0 ..... G Carter
2 (6) 0-5230 Ronaldo's Usher (34) (D) C Murray 5-9-4 ..... Nicola Howarth
3 (4) 4005-0 Rosebold (19) (CD) N Berry 8-9-4 ..... M Roberts
4 (3) 0000-0 Don Pepe (23) (C) (D) R Boss 5-9-3 ..... K Fallon
5 (8) 012404 Double Oscar (7) (D) D Nicholls 4-8-7 ..... Alex Greaves ★
6 (2) 5008-0 Waders Dream (7) (CD) Pat Mitchell 8-8-5 ..... M Fenton ★
7 (5) 504615 Bright Paragon (18) (D) K Ivory 8-7-12 ..... Martin Dwyer (3)
8 (7) 000-00 Ineligible (8) (D) M Channon 6-7-10 ..... J Quinn ★

Betting: 9-4 Prime Silk, 7-2 Bright Paragon, 11-2 Don Pepe, 8-1 Double Oscar, 8-1 Hannah's Usher, Waders Dream, 12-1 Ineligible.

4.40 WEATHERBYS ECLIPSE PEDIGREES MAIDEN FILLIES' STAKES 3YO
7f £3,582 (7 declared)

1 (1) 0 Blazer's Baby (11) J Fanshawe 8-11 ..... D Harrison
2 (3) 4 Cabcharge Glory (6) G Margerison 8-11 ..... G Bardwell
3 (6) 0600 Love Over Gold (31) M Chapman 8-11 ..... D O'Shea
4 (5) Miana Fairy J G Smyth-Osbourne 8-11 ..... S Sanders
5 (7) Sharpshilled J Gosden 8-11 ..... S Raymond
6 (2) 0-2 Tiffacar (8) B Hanbury 8-11 ..... M Worrey
7 (4) 522-04 Topstorf (28) M Tompkins 8-11 ..... D Biggs

Betting: 5-4 Stargoddess, 2-1 Tiffacar, 7-1 Blazer's baby, Topstorf, 14-1 Moon Fairy, 16-1 Cabcharge Glory, 33-1 Love Over Gold.

5.10 HORNING FILLIES' HANDICAP 3YO
1m 2f £3,044 (10 declared)

1 (6) 34-000 Princess Topaz (6) C Cyzer 9-7 ..... G Carter
2 (10) 24222- Councillors Ball (233) (BF) M Johnston 9-4 ..... D Holland
3 (7) 056 Top Jem (19) M Ryan 9-2 ..... G Bardwell
4 (1) 25-0 Pat Said No (55) D Cosgrove 9-13 ..... M Roberts
5 (3) -10353 Top Shelf (15) C Britain 8-12 ..... S Sanders
6 (2) 3-1023 Princess Of Hearts (9) M Pipe 8-11 ..... Paul Eddery ★
7 (4) 0-00 Check To Check (21) C Cyzer 8-8 ..... K Fallon
8 (8) -02508 Polar Princess (8) M Bell 8-3 ..... M Fenton
9 (9) 00-403 Swashbuckling Lady (29) D Arbuthnot 8-0 ..... Martin Dwyer (3)
10 (5) 003 Rock 'N' Rosie (32) Dr J Scargill 7-13 ..... D O'Shea

Betting: 3-1 Princess Of Hearts, 4-1 Top Shelf, Polar Princess, 8-1 Cambridge Ball, 9-1 Top Jem, 12-1 Princess Topaz, Pat Said No

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Jockeys	1st	Runs	%	Level St
M Hills	26	195	16.6	-0.60
L Dettori	25	127	19.7	-43.41
W Ryan	22	118	18.6	-18.13
Pat Eddery	17	79	21.5	-26.55
K Darley	15	61	24.6	+15.49
R Cochrane	15	84	16	+15.88

Trainers	1st	Runs	%	Level St
G E Brittain	21	147	14.3	+50.45
J H M Gosden	17	87	19.5	-14.17
M Bell	14	76	18.4	+4.65
J R Fanshawe	11	78	14.5	-31.27
M W Tompkins	10	111	9.9	-25.38
B Hanbury	9	63	14.3	-17.47
M Johnston	8	36	22.2	+8.58

Beverley with form for Jackpot races

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.00	Oxley	Pharaoh's Joy
2.30	Ellenbrook (nb)	Ellenbrook
3.00	Cee-Jay-Ay	Dawalib
3.30	Mr Teigh	Mr Teigh
4.00	Infatuation	Road Racer
4.30	Herculian	Get The Point
5.00	Rotor Man	Ronald Robin (nap)

Right-handed track of 1m3f with 2f6 run-in. Testing 5f course which rises throughout.
Going: Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rated.
Draw: High numbers best over 5f.
Long distance travellers: Caspian Morn (2.00) & Mister Bankes (2.30) W Turner, Somerset 256 miles. Infatuation (4.00) Lady Herries, W Sussex 249 miles. Dawalib (3.00) & Askern (3.30) D Haydn Jones, Mid Glamorgan 237 miles.
Seven day winners: 3.00 Reinhardt; 3.30 Mr Teigh.
Blinkered first time: 2.30 Mister Bankes. Visored: 2.00 Tart And a Half; 2.30 Miss Beveled; 3.30 Prospector's Cove.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing.

2.00 POLYGON FILLIES' HANDICAP
5f £3,153 (17 declared)

1 (15) 2000-0 Tart And A Half (16) (D) J Eyre 5-10-0 ..... G Parkin (5) ★
2 (14) 00-083 Geisty (4) (D) Mrs J Ramsden 4-9-8 ..... J Weaver
3 (3) 4-0300 Time To Tango (12) (D) R M Whitaker 4-9-6 ..... J Stewart
4 (9) 0000-0 Oh Whatanight (8) (D) R Whitaker 4-9-6 ..... Dane McKeown
5 (16) 0640- Freedom Gift (235) (D) C Booth 5-9-3 ..... K Hodgson
6 (2) 00-063 Pharaoh's Joy (16) (D) J W Payne 4-8-2 ..... K Darley ★
7 (1) 0004-4 Caspian Morn (6) W G M Turner 3-9-0 B Doughty (5)
8 (17) 005-00 Brut Rebecca (21) Mrs L Stubbs 4-8-9 ..... Mrs L Stubbs
9 (8) 0-0555 Dandyville (8) (CD) T Easterby 5-8-9 ..... J Carroll
10 (7) 04-504 Amanda (18) (BF) A Bailey 4-8-7 ..... D Wright ★
11 (11) 2053 Mystical (7) (BF) Mrs L Stubbs 3-8-6 J Goldstein (7) ★
12 (10) 0-0000 Sarahi (12) (D) J Pearce 3-8-2 ..... M Henry (5) ★
13 (1) 0-0053 Sweet Harbour (11) (D) S Kettlewell 4-7-13 ..... Dane O'Neill ★

14 (13) 050002 Gloucestrapie (11) L Lloyd-James 5-7-13 ..... Dale Gibson
15 (4) 0-0043 Sweetville (11) Miss L Siddall 4-7-13 ..... T Williams
16 (12) 5-0000 Pallazzo (6) N Bycroft 4-7-12 ..... L Charnock
17 (14) 4440-0 Rutherfield Park (43) (D) C Smith 5-7-10 ..... R Winston (7)

Betting: 4-1 Oxley, 7-1 Sweet Harbour, 8-1 Dandyville, Mystical, 10-1 Pharaoh's Joy, Caspian Morn, 12-1 Amanda, Superlifta, Premium Gift

FORM GUIDE - Tart And A Half: Led great headed and weakened quickly over 1f outin race won by behind Bluebridgeforgive at Redcar 5f, Gd-Fm. Oxley: Back to form, ran on last 2f, nearest finish, 4th 3rd of 9 behind Alwaraf at Doncaster 6f, Gd. Pharaoh's Joy: Headway under pressure 2f out, 11 3rd of 10 third Polly Golightly at Lingfield 5f, Gd-Fm. Mystical: Rubbed over 1f out, headway final furlong, ran on, 3l 3rd of 7 behind Limestone Rocket at Folkestone 5f sft, Gd-Fm.

2.30 MORE LEARNING CLAIMING STAKES 2YO
5f £2,548 (11 declared)

201 (5) 00 Ara Ver There (14) M W Easterby 9-3 ..... T Lucas
202 (10) 21564 Mister Rainbow (16) (D) W G M Turner 9-3 ..... D McKeown (7) ★
203 (2) 0 Baybusher (32) M W Easterby 8-13 ..... Dale Gibson
204 (9) 5 Bow Peep (12) M W Easterby 8-12 ..... G Parkin (5)
205 (7) 4103 Penalties (25) (D) (BF) N Tinkler 8-12 ..... Miss Diane Clark
206 (6) 43 Sandy Shoes (16) J Weaver 8-12 ..... J Carroll
207 (4) Mystery Piper P Murphy 8-9 ..... R Pimlock (5)
208 (11) 522211 Glenwaylde (18) (D) J Berry 8-8 ..... P Fessey (5) ★
209 (3) 545335 Bellabelle (19) M Johnston 8-5 ..... K Darley
210 (8) 03388 Miss Beveled (17) M Bridgett 8-0 ..... D Nicholls (7) ★
211 (1) Tancred Times D Barker 8-0 ..... T Williams

Betting: 2-1 Mister Rainbow, 9-4 Glenwaylde, 11-2 Penalties, 8-1 Bellabelle, 12-1 Sandy Shoes, 14-1 Miss Beveled, Tancred Times, 20-1 Bow Peep

FORM GUIDE - Mister Rainbow: With leader until weakened 1f out, 4th of 5 behind Rusty Rebo at Pontefract 6f, Gd. Penalties: Tracked leaders, no impression from 1f out, 4l 3rd of 17 third Laurel Pincess at Thirsk 5f clmr, Gd. Sandy Shoes: Outpaced 2f out, soon lost tch, 15l 3rd of 9 third Sun In The Morning at Leicester 5f clmr, Gd. Miss Beveled: Mid-div, steady 4f, clear over 2f out, easily, won by 5l from Jack-N-Jilly at Wolverhampton 6f, Aw.

3.00 B.THERINGTON HANDICAP
7f 100yds £3,834 (14 declared)

301 (3) (-8000 Desert Cat (D) M

Soccer

Australia guns for Venables

TERRY VENABLES's future as coach of Australia may be in doubt after his alleged involvement in transfers of Australian players to his club Portsmouth.

Several Australian clubs are to write to Soccer Australia alleging that Venables, who is Portsmouth's chairman and owner, has a conflict of interest. The clubs are citing the Stewart report, a 1994 document about alleged corruption in transfer dealings, in particular with regard to the impropriety of national coaches involved in any deals.

Portsmouth are buying three Australians: the former Leicester and Wolves goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac, Robert Enes and Hamilton Thorp. Kalac and Enes were last week named by Venables in a 26-man squad for Oceania's World Cup qualifying tournament, which opens for Australia with a match against the Solomon Islands today.

The Sydney Olympic club president Simon Konstantinidis said the conflict existed because Venables could influence the value of players on the transfer market by selecting them for Australia, who are tipped as World Cup finalists. Venables would benefit directly if players were then sold for a higher price to another club in Europe, he said.

Venables denies he has acted in an underhand manner. "Terry Fenwick [the manager] has made the decisions on these players. I just sent him some tapes and he looked over them. Anyone could have done the same."

The Stewart report reads: "Any breach [of the code of conduct for those involved in the national squad] shall constitute an offence which is subject to disciplinary action by the Australian Soccer Federation. A squad member shall at no time involve himself in any way with the transfer of an Australian registered player eligible to play for an Australian national team to an overseas club."

Sergio Porrini, the 28-year-old central defender who joined Rangers yesterday in a £3 million move from Juventus, apparently hates football. In an interview in Turin, he said he disliked the modern game intensely and would retire as soon as his four-year deal at Ibrox ended. "It is a world I don't like," he said, "a world where one doesn't say what one thinks. I will carry on wearing the colours of my club until my contract ends, then leave football."

Porrini will reportedly be paid £750,000 a year to link up with Lorenzo Amoruso, signed from Fiorentina last week in a £5 million deal.

Sunderland may face a bill of more than half a million pounds for ending Ronen Harazi's Premiership adventure, *writes Ian Ross*. In January the Israel striker signed a four-year contract, subject to a medical examination; that revealed he still had the after-effects of an old foot injury, but he lodged a complaint with Fifa, insisting that the deal he had struck with Sunderland's manager Peter Reid was legal and binding.

Fifa has now ruled in the player's favour, which is likely to give Harazi the right to demand that his £2,700-a-week contract be paid in full.

It is believed to be the first time Fifa has officially stated that it does not recognise the British system of clubs formalising transfers subject to subsequent medical tests.

Babbel stops talking to United

MARKUS BABBEL's move to Manchester United abruptly stalled yesterday when the Bayern Munich defender said the money was not good enough for him to leave the German champions.

Bayern's manager Uli Hoeness confirmed that United had agreed to pay a transfer fee of 14 million marks (£5 million) for Babbel, whose contract runs until next June. German media reported that Babbel, 24, then asked for an annual salary of four million marks (£1.4 million) over three years whereas United offered 1.75 million marks (£627,000) over three years.

"If the two sides had reached an agreement we would have let Babbel go," said Hoeness. The player went on holiday yesterday, saying that negotiations could continue through his lawyer.

If Babbel does go to United it will be the third major transfer from Bayern, who recently won a record 14th German League title. The international striker Jürgen Klinsmann has signed for Sampdoria and their international wing-back Christian Ziege is joining AC Milan.

Meanwhile, England are likely to be granted an additional place in the 1998-99 Uefa Cup after finishing top of last season's Uefa Fair Play League. It would see the number of clubs entered rise from four to five.

Arrigo Sacchi, the former Italian national coach who left AC Milan last week, is again being linked with the Everton vacancy; he is known to be keen to move to England. The club's chairman Peter Johnson is also believed to be studying the credentials of Andy Gray, the Sky TV pundit who was a key member of Everton's successful side of the mid-Eighties.

Brighton have submitted plans for a £25 million sports complex on council-owned fields on the outskirts of the town at Waterhall, presently the home of Brighton rugby club. The all-seat stadium's capacity would rise from 15,000 to 25,000.

Tennis

Lee the wild card is still untamed

David Irvine reports from Queen's Club

EYEBROWS were raised when Martin Lee, a 19-year-old Sussex left-hander ranked 500 in the world, was offered a wild card into the Stella Artois Championships here this week. Yesterday he again responded superbly, following up his three-set win over the Russian Andrei Olhovskiy by felling the world No. 34 Alex O'Brien of the United States by 4–6, 6–3, 6–2.

Tim Henman's subsequent 4–6, 6–3, 6–2 victory over another home player, Lincoln's Andrew Richardson, means that for the first time since the event began in 1979 Britain has more than one survivor in the last 16.

Henman, who has been chiefly responsible for the British revival in the past two years, was delighted at Lee's success. He felt it had shown admirable character to recover from a set down against both his opponents. "I think this is a real breakthrough for him," he said.

It was not a classic grass-court tennis exhibition but Lee won because of his back-court game, not at the net. Lee, whose success has already lifted him more than 100 places in the world rankings, said his victory over Olhovskiy — who beat Jim Courier when the American was top seed at Wimbledon in 1992 — had given him a hitherto unknown level of confidence. It showed, especially in the second-set tie-break and the closing stages of the match.

Despite his vast experience and pedigree it was O'Brien who looked nervous and flustered at the critical moments, double-faulting feebly and dumping easy volleys in the net. Lee, for his part, wowed the enthusiastic No. 1 Court crowd with some inch-perfect forehand passes and an increasingly effective display of serving.

Though he lost an early advantage in the final set, he denied O'Brien his best chance at 2–3 and eventually broke free for 5–4 with a glorious running forehand winner before serving out to love.

Though it might seem fanciful to expect Lee, who normally plays at satellite level, to reach the quarter-finals, his probable third-round opponent is the idiosyncratic Goran Ivanisevic, who has had problems with Britons in the past. The Croat lost to Chris Wilkinson here in 1993 and to Nick Brown at Wimbledon.

Henman took a full hour to settle into any real rhythm against Richardson but once he had broken for 3–1 in the second set he dropped only three more points on serve.

"At the end of the first set I was telling myself that at least I could only get better, and that's what happened," said Henman, who hit 13 aces in all and now plays the inexperienced German Jens Knippschild.

● When rain stopped play Greg Rusedski's match with Mark Woodforde was perfectly poised at 4–6, 6–4, 1–1 and 40-all.

Study in concentration . . . Tim Henman on the way to victory over Lincoln's Andrew Richardson PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Becker's Halle heaven

Chris Bowers in Halle

BORIS BECKER confirmed he is still a force on grass with a 6–3, 7–6 win over Alex Radulescu here yesterday. The older German broke service only once, catching Radulescu cold, and then served his way to victory.

Becker looked full of confidence, connecting with some stunning returns which augured well for his Wimbledon prospects. He ensured his victory with a swashbuckling fifth point in the tie-break, delighting a 12,500 crowd with a typical Becker cameo: he slipped after returning serve, only to pick himself up and scramble across the baseline to slide into a cross-court backhand which left Radulescu stranded.

The whole match was played in a carnival atmosphere. This is the fifth time the Halle event has been staged and there have been two Davis Cup ties here, but it was the first time the locals had been treated to the country's most charismatic player.

Becker was given a standing ovation as he came on to court and was in a mellow mood afterwards. "That was the best I have served for months," he said, "I'm happy with my game — and also with his [Radulescu's]." This was a reference to the fact that he and his 22-year-old compatriot have practised together over the past fortnight in London.

Any spectators who thought they could nip out for a leisurely coffee and cake and return to see the No. 1 seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov in action would have missed a highly impressive display of grass-court play from the Russian. The 1996 French Open champion took only 39 minutes to dismiss the Dutchman Sjeng Schalken 6–0, 6–2.

A rather higher-rated Dutchman, Richard Krajicek, warmed up for the defence of his All-England title with a storming 6–1, 6–1 win over Joshua Eagle.

Blow for Wimbledon as knee op puts Graf out for four months

STEFFI GRAF, the Wimbledon women's singles holder, will miss this year's championships after undergoing a knee operation in Vienna yesterday that will keep her out for four months.

The 27-year-old German, who slipped to No. 3 in the world rankings after losing in the French Open quarter-finals last week, needed the operation because her kneecap was irritating a tendon.

Graf, who was kept off the circuit for more than three months this season with another knee injury, entered a rehabilitation clinic run by Willy Dungl, who recently supervised the recuperation of the former Formula One motor racing champion Niki Lauda after a kidney transplant.

● *Richard Jago adds from Edgbaston:* The British No. 1 Samantha Smith gained a 6–4, 6–4 win over South Korea's Park Sung Hee in the first round of the DFS Classic along with a wild card into Wimbledon and today meets the third-seeded American Lisa Raymond.

Two of Britain's other six wild cards in the Wimbledon women's singles, Claire Taylor and Shirli-Ann Siddall, failed to reach the second round.

Golf

Cocoon of hype around Tiger

David Davies in Bethesda on Woods' arrival for US Open

PERHAPS the headline in the Washington Post, one of the United States' most respected newspapers, summed it up best. It read: "He Shows Up. Finally."

"He" is Tiger Woods, and by arriving a little late on Monday at the Congressional Country Club, home this week to the US Open, he caused consternation and chaos.

Woods had been expected at about 1pm. He arrived at about 3pm, and for much of the time from noon onwards the clubhouse had been jammed with people waiting for him to arrive, waiting to watch him walk — yes, walk — from his car to the men's locker room.

When he arrived 14 marshals surrounded him as he went to the locker room, and when he then went to the practice ground they were joined by four uniformed and armed policemen.

There has never been anything like this in golf before. People are literally falling over themselves to catch a glimpse of a 21-year-old. Tigermania certainly — with hysteria mixed in.

The object of their attentions appears unfazed by it all. He has developed the fixed grin of an ice skater as he moves along in the middle of his protective cocoon, and when he is released from it, as at the 1st tee, he shows no sign of anything unusual having happened. For him this has become the norm.

But there is nothing normal about Woods. He is, possibly, the best-known name in American sport at the moment, not so much for his achievements as because he is of mixed race and taking on the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant establishment. Woods refers to himself as a Cablinasian, a word he invented to describe his Caucasian-black-Indian-Asian origins.

The product of that melting-pot is a handsome young man of outstanding athletic ability who won the US Masters in April, the first professional major championship in which he played. There was a delicious irony in that, given the racism that still bedevils the South and the fact that so few black golfers have made their way past the gates of Augusta National.

That victory, and the four others he has achieved since turning professional in August 1996, have led to companies fighting to shower him with millions of dollars.

Nike has given him $40 million (£24.5 million) to wear its "swoosh", and a recent deal with American Express is said to top that. Another is being negotiated with the hamburger chain McDonald's which will top them all. At a conservative estimate, that is $150 million in sponsorship.

It is enough to turn the heads of those who should know better. One writer this week said "the US Open is Tiger's to lose", and Sports Illustrated devoted eight pages to the debate on whether Woods can, in 1997, win the Grand Slam — all four majors in the same year.

Winning all four is something players of the calibre of Tom Watson, Lee Trevino, Johnny Miller, Severiano Ballesteros and Sam Snead failed to do over the course of whole careers, so it seems a little premature to talk of Woods doing it in his first year.

But the money and speculation appear to have turned Tiger's head. Last week Nick Faldo visited the White House to talk golf with President Clinton, and this week Greg Norman has followed him. But Woods is unlikely to be invited again. Just after the Masters he declined an invitation; he said he would have gone had it arrived before the Masters win.

Now consider his behaviour with some of his fellow pros in the locker room. One, Doug Martin, asked him to sign a glove for his six-year-old child, and was refused. Another, Billy Andrade, asked him to sign a golf ball to complete a collection signed by all the living Masters champions, which was to be auctioned at a Charity for Children Pro-Am; Woods said he did not sign golf balls, and the collection, without a Woods ball, was eventually sold to a plumber from Massachusetts for $50,000.

This week there will be no time for extraneous items. Woods is a short-priced favourite to win the US Open. If he does, there will not be a clubhouse corridor big enough in all the land to accommodate those who want to watch him walk from his car to the locker room.

● The Italian Costantino Rocca has pulled out of the US Open with a muscle injury.

Rugby Union

New sponsor sought for cup

TWICKENHAM chiefs are seeking a new sponsor for their cup competition, after Pilkington said it wanted to withdraw from the remaining two years of its £1.5 million contract.

A brewer is understood to be interested in taking over what Pilkington described as an "essentially English domestic competition" which no longer fitted the glass manufacturer's "worldwide" profile.

The Scottish RU has agreed a £500,000 three-year deal with BBC Scotland on TV rights for club rugby, European qualifying and Scotland games against countries such as Italy, Argentina and Western Samoa.

● The Welsh champions Pontypridd have renewed their £500,000 sponsorship deal with Just Rentals.

Diprose flies in at No.8

Robert Armstrong in Pretoria

TONY DIPROSE is expected to be an immediate contender for a Test place when he flies into Durban tomorrow as a No. 8 replacement for the injured Scott Quinnell.

The 24-year-old Saracens forward will make his Lions debut in next Tuesday's match against the Emerging Springboks in Wellington, and his excellent form may propel him straight into the squad of 21 for the first Test in Cape Town on Saturday week.

The Lions management rate the 6ft 5in, 17-stone Diprose so highly that he was preferred to the far more experienced Ben Clarke, who has played Test rugby for England and the Lions for the past five seasons.

Diprose's ability was rewarded recently with his first two caps on the England tour of Argentina. "He is a very good ball-player and he can also win line-out possession as well as being good in defence," Fran Cotton, the Lions manager, said yesterday.

Tim Rodber, who leads the Lions in tonight's game against Transvaal at Ellis Park, will probably find that Diprose becomes his closest rival for the No. 8 berth.

It remains to be seen whether the management will repeat the experiment of playing the Irish No. 8 Eric Miller at open-side flanker; his unfamiliarity with the role at this level suggests he will revert to No. 8, and may play there in Saturday's game against Natal in Durban.

Carel Du Plessis tasted victory in his first match as South Africa coach when the Springboks defeated Tonga 74–10 in Cape Town yesterday.

Bath's fly-half Mike Catt and lock Nigel Redman have been recalled to the England squad to play Australia in Sydney on July 12.

ENGLAND SQUAD: Full-backs: T Stimpson (Newcastle). **N Back** (Northampton). **Wings:** A Adebayo, J Sleightholme (both Bath), R Underwood (Newcastle). **Centres:** P de Glanville (capt, Bath), M Greenstock (Wasps), W Greenwood (Leicester), J Guscott (Bath). **Fly-halves:** M Catt (Bath), P Grayson (Northampton), A King (Wasps). **Scrum-halves:** K Bracken (Saracens), M Dawson (Northampton), A Gomarsall (Wasps), A Healey (Leicester). **Props:** D Garforth (Leicester), J Leonard (Harlequins), G Rowntree (Leicester), K Yates (Bath). **Hookers:** R Cockerill (Leicester), P Greening (Gloucester), M Regan (Bristol). **Locks:** M Haag (Bath), M Johnson (Leicester), M Redman (Bath), S Shaw (Bristol). **Back-rowmen:** N Back (Leicester), B Clarke (Richmond), J Dorn (Bristol), L Dallaglio (Wasps), R Hill, T Rodber (both Saracens), T Rodber (Northampton), C Sheasby (Wasps).

Rugby League

Farrell fighting fit for Wigan

THE Wigan captain Andy Farrell will be fit to lead the Warriors against Brisbane Broncos in Brisbane on Monday in their second World Club Championship match; a leg injury suffered against Canterbury Bulldogs is not as serious as first feared. The Great Britain prop Terry O'Connor has recovered from an ankle injury.

Matt Adamson, the Penrith Panthers forward, and Anthony Swann, the Auckland Warriors centre, have been suspended for one game for offences committed in the first round of matches.

The Salford forward Ian Blease, banned for life last Thursday for assaulting a touch-judge, will appeal to the Rugby Football League next Thursday against the severity of the sentence.

KEEPING TRACK
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	COMMENTARY	RESULTS
SALISBURY	771	781
BEVERLEY	772	782
YARMOUTH	773	783
NEWMARKET (E)	774	784
HAMILTON (E)	775	785
UTTOXETER (E)	776	786
ALL COURSES COMMENTARY	0891 222 780	
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Results

Soccer

PORTUGUESE CUP: Final: Boavista 3, Benfica 2

Rugby Union

TOUR MATCHES: Victoria 13, France 65; NZ Maori 41, Ireland Dev XV 10.
INTERNATIONALS: SA 74, Tonga 10.

Tennis

ATP GERMAN GRASS-COURT TOURNAMENT (Halle): First rounds: T Haas (Ger) bt B Ullrich (Ger) 6–1, 6–2; M Kiefer (Ger) bt J Grabb (US) 6–3, 6–2; B Becker (Ger) bt A Radulescu (Ger) 6–3, 7–6; V Kafelnikov (Rus) bt S Schalken (Neth) 6–0, 6–2; R Raseborg (US) bt K Brasch (Ger) 6–1, 6–7, 6–3.
ATP STELLA ARTOIS TOURNAMENT (Queens): First rounds: D Nestor (Can) bt P DeWulf (Bel) 6–7, 6–4, 6–2; S Stolon (Fr) bt J Siemerink (Neth) 6–4, 6–0; B Black (Zim) bt N Meriouza (Por) 6–4, 7–6; T Woodbridge (Aus) bt J-A Marin (Sp) 6–4, 7–6; B Steven (NZ) bt M Goellner (Ger) 4–6, 6–1, 6–4; D Flach (US) bt B Mashie (US) 6–4, 6–4; P Rafter (Aus) bt E Ran (Isr) 7–5, 6–2; G Rusedski (GB) and M Woodforde (Aus) level at 4–6, 6–4, 1–1 (rain). **Second round:** M Lee (GB) bt A O'Brien (US) 3–6, 7–6, 6–4; T Henman (GB) bt A Richardson (GB) 4–6, 6–3, 6–2; J-P Fleurian (Fr) bt C Pioline (Fr) 7–5, 6–3; J Knippschild (Ger) bt C Delaitre (Fr) 6–4, 7–6; J Goldsmid (Fr) bt M Rosset (Switz) 7–6, 6–3; M Philippoussis (Aus) bt J Stark (US) 7–6, 3–6, 6–3.
MEN'S BOLOGNA INTERNATIONAL: First rounds: D Soltz (It) bt H Gunty (Arg) 6–4, 7–5; O Grosse (Ger) bt A Martin (Sp) 6–2, 6–3; K Alami (Mor) bt D Prpecerlu (Rom) 6–3, 6–1; F Madigand (Fr) bt R Carretero (Sp) 6–3, 6–4; F Mantilla (Sp) bt M Gorriz (Sp) 4–6, 6–3, 6–4; M Lapentti (Ecu) bt C Costa (Sp) 6–4, 3–1 ret; F Squillari (Arg) bt C Ruud (Nor) 6–1, 6–4; J Diaz (Sp) bt F Fredriksson (Swe) 7–5, 6–1; A Gaudenzi (It) bt G Blanco (Sp) 7–5, 6–4.
WOMEN'S GRASS-COURT TOURNAMENT (Edgbaston): 1st round (GB/Ire unless stated): **S Smith** bt S Park (Kor) 6–4, 6–4; **L Ahl** bt C Taylor 6–4, 6–1; **K-A Guse** (Aus) bt A Ellwood (Aus) 6–0, 6–0; **S Smith** (GB) bt Sung Hee Park (Kor) 6–4, 6–4; **L Ahl** (GB) bt C Taylor (GB) 6–4, 6–1; **K-A Guse** (Aus) bt A Ellwood (Aus) 6–0, 6–0; **S Kloboves** (Ca) bt A Olsza (Pol) 6–4, 6–4; **S Cacic** (US) bt S-A Siddall 6–3, 6–4; **C Tanasie-Talaro** (Sp) bt R Hiraki (Japan) 1–6, 7–6, 6–3; **A Fusai** (Fr) bt N Van Lottum (Fr) 6–1, 4–6, 6–4; **W Probst** (Ger) bt S Farina (It) 1–6, 6–4, 6–2; **M Sensa** (Sp) bt N Faber (Bel) 6–4, 7–6. **Second rounds:** I Spirlea (Rom) bt R McQuillan (Aus) 7–5, 7–6; **M Maleeva** (Bul) bt L Cenkova (Cz) 6–2, 6–1; **M Tesedor** (Fr) bt K Brandi (US) 6–1, 6–4; **Y Basuki** (Indo) bt N Kijimuta (Japan) 6–1, 6–1; **A-G Sidot** (Fr) bt C Cristea (Rom) 6–4, 4–6, 6–1; **G Helgason-Stefan** (US) bt L Neiland (Lat) 6–3, 6–4.

Athletics

INTERNATIONAL MEET (Bratislava): Selected Men 110m hurdles: 1. E Batte (Cuba) 13.49sec, 3. T Jarrett (GB) 13.81. **Discus:** 1. L Riedel (Ger) 68.40m. **Women 800m:** 1. V Fahlenko (Ukr) 22.89sec. **Triple jump:** 1. A Hansen (GB) 14.70m. **Shot:** 1. A Kumbernuss (Ger) 20.51m.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Chicago 2, Baltimore 10; Kansas City 5, Anaheim 12.
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Los Angeles 8, Houston 3; Cincinnati 2, New York 4; Montreal 8, Chicago 5; Colorado 8, Atlanta 3; San Diego 1, St Louis 9; San Francisco 7, Florida 4.

Basketball

WOMEN'S EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP: Final rounds: Group A (Zalaegerszeg): Lithuania 73, Ukraine 70. **Group B (Pecs):** Russia 68, Moldova 53.

Cricket

COSTCUTTER CUP: Semi-finals: Harrogate: Scotland 222–7 (B M W Patterson 97). Durham 226–2 (M A Roseberry 102no, P D Collingwood 64). Durham won by eight wickets.
ACM REEK TROPHY: Ebbw Vale: Somerset 112 (Butcher 5–28). Glamorgan 116–4. Glamorgan won by six wickets. **Stanley Parks:** MCC Young Cricketers 313–8 (P R Shaw 67, N J Thurgood 58). Essex 273–9 (S D Peters 98). MCC Young Cricketers won by 40 runs. **Shenfords:** Middlesex 285–6 (D J Goodchild 85no, K P Dutch 54, D C Nash 5cno). Minor Counties 229 (R G Hignett 101; Bloomfield 6–45). Middlesex won by 56 runs. **Worksop College:** Durham 178 (D A Bakerian 32). Nottinghamshire 180–1 (C E Walton 80no). Notts won by nine wickets.
MINOR COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIP (First day; today: 11.0): **Hurst:** Berkshire 252–6 (S A Seymour 102). Shropshire 179 (Kendrick 5–46).

Cycling

DAUPHINE LIBERE: Second stage (Champagne-au-Mont-d'Or to Le Puy, 216km): 1. V Yakimov (Rus) US Postal 5hr 13min 22sec; 2. P Chanteur (Fr) Casino; 3. R Virenque (Fr) Festina; 4. L Dufaux (Switz) Festina; 5. L Brochard (Fr) Festina; 6. A Olano (Sp) Banesto; 7. F Gougot (Fr) Casino; 8. D Rebellin (It) Francaise des Jeux; 9. M Boogerd (Neth) Rabobank; 10. P Indurain (Sp) Banesto all same time. **Overall:** 1. Yekimov 10hr 36min 2sec; 2. A Zuelle (Switz) ONCE at 10sec; 3. Olano 13; 4. Brochard 15; 5. Boogerd 18; 6. C Moreau (Fr) Festina 19; 7. R Meier (Switz) US Postal 20; 8. F Meimert (Den) US Postal 22; 9. Chanteur 24; 10. D Baranowski (Pol) US Postal 25.

Hockey

INTERNATIONAL (Harsn, Neths): Netherlands 8, England 2

Motor Sport

ACROPOLIS RALLY: Leading final positions: 1. C Sainz (Sp) Ford 4hr 56min 24sec; 2. J Kankkunen (Fin) Ford 4:56.41; 3. T Makinen (Fin) Mitsubishi 5:01.27; 4. R Burns (GB) Mitsubishi 5:01.31; 5. Y Rautaranen (Swe) Toyota 5:04.11; 6. U. Nittel (Ger) Mitsubishi 5:06.28; 7. G de Mevius (Bel) Ford 5:07.49; 8. Y Sakurai (Japan) Subaru 5:11.15; 9. A Vovos (Gr) Subaru 5:12.05; 10. L Kirkos (Gr) Ford 5:14.33. **World drivers' championship** after 3 legs: 1. Makinen 42pts; 2. C McRae (GB) Subaru 32; 3. Sainz 28; 4. P Liatti (It) Subaru 16; 5. K Eriksson (Swe) Subaru 14; 6. A Schwarz (Ger) Ford 11; 7. Burns 9; 8. G Panizzi (Fr) Peugeot 8 **Manufacturers' standings:** 1. Subaru 64pts; 2. Mitsubishi 53; 3. Ford 45

Squash

AL-AHRAM INTERNATIONAL (Cairo): **Final qualifying:** S Castelayne (Bel) bt J Knapp (Aus) 15–13, 15–12, 15–11, 11–15, 15–8; C Wapnaldi (SA) bt G Whitaker (SA) 14–17, 15–13, 15–12, 15–5; P Marshall (Eng) bt J Davis (Eng) 15–9, 15–2, 15–4; A Shabana (Egypt) bt D Meddings (Eng) 15–11, 15–5, 15–12; J Waite (Aus) bt W Hatim (Egypt) 15–10, 15–11, 15–6; T Sanders (Eng) bt M Zaman Gul (Pak) 11–15, 17–15, 15–12, 14–17, 15–9; A Gough (Wales) bt N Taylor (Eng) 15–12, 15–7, 15–6; D Evans (Wales) bt L Butt (Neth) 17–14, 15–5, 15–10.
WOMEN'S ISOSTAR CIRCUIT TOURNAMENT (Maastricht): Second-round: J Treasdell (Eng) bt V Atkinson (Neth) 4–9, 9–6, 9–6, 9–6; M Van Hoorn (Neth) bt S Macfie (Scot) 10–8, 5–8, 9–7, 9–3. **Finals:** Treasdell bt Van Hoorn 9–1, 9–0, 9–0.

Fixtures

Soccer

TOURNOI DE FRANCE: France v Italy (7.45).
WORLD CUP EUROPEAN QUALIFYING: Group eight: Iceland v Lithuania (8.0).
EUROPEAN U21 CHAMPIONSHIP: 1998/99 Qualifying: Group eight: Iceland v Lithuania (3.0).

Rugby Union

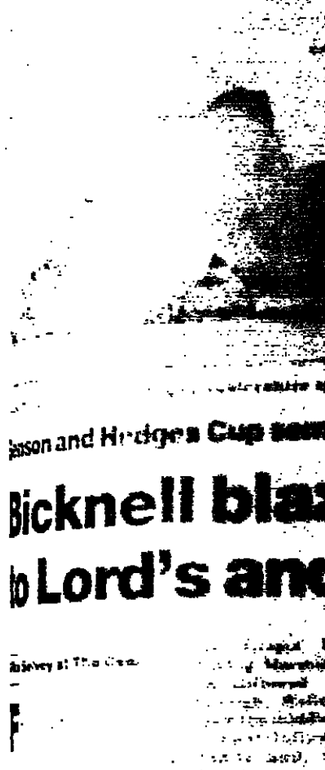
TOUR MATCH: Gauteng Lions v British Lions (6.15, Johannesburg).

Cricket

TOUR MATCH (Three days: 11.0) Trent Bridge: Nottinghamshire v Australia.
COSTCUTTER CUP (11.0): **Finals:** Harrogate: Durham v Gloucestershire.
SECOND XI CHAMPIONSHIP (three days; 11.0): **Roseaters:** Derbyshire v Middlesex. **Wicklords:** Essex v Leicestershire. **Arrowsdowns:** Glamorgan v Nottinghamshire. **Fleshampstead:** Hampshire v Northamptonshire. **Southport:** Lancashire v Gloucestershire. **Chasm:** Surrey v Worcestershire. **Grit and Colour:** Warwickshire v Durham. **York:** Yorkshire v Sussex.

● Sussex are lodging an official complaint with the English Cricket Board (ECB) following their farcical Sunday League defeat at Durham this week.

The county faced a revised target of 80 in four overs under the complex Duckworth-Lewis system after torrential rain caused a 100-minute delay to the match at Chester-le-Street.



هكذا من الاصل

Golf

Cocoon of hype around Tiger

David Davies

Bett... on Vide... arrival for US Op...

P...

Mason's arms . . . the young Leicestershire spinner breaks the wicket at the bowler's end to run out Chris Lewis from Aftab Habib's throw at The Oval PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Benson and Hedges Cup semi-finals: Surrey v Leicestershire

Bicknell blazes the trail to Lord's and his destiny

Mike Selvey at The Oval

FOR the second round running Martin Bicknell has taken Surrey to victory. In the quarter-final his three top-order wickets helped dispose of Essex. Yesterday an inspired burst of four for 41 from 10 overs at the start of the Leicestershire innings ended any chance the Running Fox had in chasing 309 to reach the final.

At a beanpole 17 he looked destined for a long England career. Two caps, many injuries and 11 years on, there may yet be more to come. When Bicknell took his sweater and retired to the outfield, Leicestershire were 70 for six. Surrey won by 130 runs to reach their fourth B & H final but their first in 16 years.

A typically bouncy Oval pitch, air like treacle and a tidy cross-breeze presented ideal conditions for a 6ft 3in away-swing bowler, and Bicknell used them perfectly. He had Darren Maddy caught at the wicket, bowled James Whitaker off the inside edge and, after Chris Lewis had sent Neil Johnson back without scoring, had Aftab Habib dabbing to a solitary slip, all inside seven overs.

Then, after Ian Salisbury had broken a promising partnership between Vince Wells and Gregor Macmillan by having Macmillan leg-before, he slithered an inswinger through Wells and pegged back the middle stump.

What followed was academic and, had Graham Thorpe not reprieved Paul Nixon on 10, would have been a whole lot swifter. Instead Nixon made 53 and, with Tim Mason (30), added 75 for the ninth wicket before Leicestershire were all out.

The assertion by the Surrey coach Dave Gilbert that it is unfair to schedule a match of this importance so soon after the rigours of a Test is spot on: Leicestershire were clearly disadvantaged yesterday through having no representatives at Edgbaston whereas Surrey's stalwarts merely carried on where they left off against the Australians.

Leicestershire, who put Surrey in, made a handy start, with Alan Mullally sending back Ally Brown and Ben Hollioake in his first two overs. It proved a false dawn; Alec Stewart and Thorpe are quality players in prime form.

The next 32 overs saw a stand of 158, ended only when Thorpe (79) tried to hoick Wells over the leg side and was bowled. Stewart — 87 from 104 balls with seven fours and a six — followed five overs later, shuffling down the pitch to Mason's off-spin and carrying on into the pavilion when he missed.

By that time, however, Adam Hollioake was entrenched and embarking on a display of clean striking that included four fours and two huge off-side sixes. When he was caught at long-off he had made 63 from 40 balls.

SURREY

A D Brown c Nixon b Mullally	4
†A J Stewart st Nixon b Mason	87
B C Hollioake c Whitaker b Mullally	9
G P Thorpe b Wells	79
*A J Hollioake c Millns b Johnson	63
C C Lewis run out	12
M A Butcher run out	20
J D Ratcliffe not out	13
I D K Salisbury c Nixon b Johnson	2
M P Bicknell not out	1
Extras (b7, w11)	18
Total (for 8, 50 overs)	308

Fall of wickets: 4, 15, 173, 210, 228, 280, 291, 297.

Did not bat: Saqlain Mushtaq.

Bowlings: Mullally 10–0–63–2; Millns 7–0–45–2; Wells 8–0–38–1; Johnson 7–0–58–2; Mason 10–0–55–1; Dakin 8–0–54–0.

LEICESTERSHIRE

V J Wells b Bicknell	32
D L Maddy c Stewart b Bicknell	2
*J J Whitaker b Bicknell	12
N C Johnson c Stewart b Lewis	0
A Habib c Thorpe b Bicknell	2
G I Macmillan lbw b Salisbury	16
†P A Nixon c Thorpe b A J Hollioake	53
J M Dakin c Ratcliffe b Salisbury	7
A D Mullally c Thorpe b B C Hollioake	4
T J Mason c Thorpe b A J Hollioake	30
D J Millns not out	6
Extras (lb8, w7, nb2)	15
Total (45.3 overs)	178

Fall of wickets: 9, 28, 29, 32, 55, 68, 84, 96, 171.

Bowlings: Bicknell 10–2–41–4; Lewis 10–0–26–1; Salisbury 10–0–47–2; B C Hollioake 5–0–24–1; Saqlain Mushtaq 8–1–21–0; A J Hollioake 2.3–0–11–2.

Umpires: J W Holder and R Julian.

Benson and Hedges Cup semi-finals: Kent v Northamptonshire

Deadly Headley puts the final hop in Kent's step

Paul Weaver at Canterbury

THE famous lime tree at the St Lawrence Ground seemed to rustle with a frisson of anticipation. It has cast its benign shadow on few periods as stirring as this for Kent. At the start of the season they were 4,500–1 to win all four trophies, and that price looks a snip this morning.

They are second in the Championship, second in the Sunday league and yesterday they progressed to their eighth Benson and Hedges Cup final with some brio against a rather haunted looking Northamptonshire (three finals).

Kent have lost four of their previous seven finals, including the last three, and their 1995 defeat despite Aravinda de Silva's heroic hundred is still a sad memory in the land of the hop. But Surrey know they face a very spirited as well as talented side at Lord's on July 12.

Kent's 66-run victory yesterday, with four overs to spare, looked improbable after their faltering innings had ended on 206 for eight. But Dean Headley, back after injury, smartly took the wickets of Russell Warren, Malachy Loye and Kevin Curran for 16 runs in 26 deliveries and Northants, already with a rather distorted look to their batting order, were misshapen beyond repair.

John Wright, Kent's new coach, has made a difference. A few days ago the gentle New Zealander strapped on his pads, strode into the nets and hammered his bowlers far and wide. As a player he was an authentic international batsman who scored almost as many runs as Martin Crowe from only a handful more games. This is a happy as well as a combative side and Wright and his captain Steve Marsh should take most of the credit.

Northamptonshire, despite their impressive quarter-final win at Headingley, appear in some disarray. Yesterday their batting order might have been reversed without disadvantage.

The noble Rob Bailey resembled some overworked field-hospital medic asked to attend too many gaping wounds. When he was out for a dogged 69-ball 33, they were 79 for five, 27 overs had gone and the game looked over. Paul Strang, more impressive in this form of cricket, supported Headley admirably.

When Kent batted they slumped to 63 for four before Trevor Ward (78) and Mark Ealham (41) added exactly 100 in 26 overs. Kent were all set for the slog but then lost three wickets in six balls in the 41st and 42nd overs and once again Northamptonshire were vainly hopeful.

KENT

M V Fleming c Walton b Follett	6
M J Walker c Warren b Follett	4
D P Fulton c Emburey b Taylor	17
T R Ward run out	78
A P Wells c Warren b Penberthy	1
M A Ealham b Emburey	41
N J Llong run out	0
P A Strang c sub b Taylor	2
*†S A Marsh not out	27
M J McCague not out	12
Extras (lb9, w7, nb2)	18
Total (for 8, 50 overs)	206

Fall of wickets: 11, 13, 36, 63, 163, 163, 164, 170.

Did not bat: D W Headley.

Bowlings: Taylor 10–1–31–2; Follett 5–0–30–2; Curran 5–0–22–0; Penberthy 10–1–34–1; Emburey 10–1–35–1; Snape 10–0–40–0.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

†R J Warren b Headley	4
M B Loye lbw b Headley	4
*R J Bailey c Marsh b McCague	33
K M Curran c Walker b Headley	5
A L Penberthy c Wells b Fleming	13
T C Walton c Fulton b Strang	19
D J G Sales c Wells b Strang	15
J N Snape c Llong b Strang	5
J E Emburey not out	19
J P Taylor c Fulton b Strang	7
D Follett c Strang b Ealham	4
Extras (lb3, w3, nb6)	12
Total (46 overs)	140

Fall of wickets: 5, 24, 34, 59, 79, 94, 107, 109, 120.

Bowlings: McCague 10–0–35–1; Headley 10–0–38–3; Fleming 9–1–20–1; Ealham 5–2–11–1; Strang 10–2–28–4; Llong 3–0–11–0.

Umpires: A A Jones and R Palmer.

The Australians are unhappy for greater reasons than a lost Test

IT CERTAINLY isn't the end, or the beginning of the end. It's arguably not even the end of the beginning. But it was one helluva start.

It was glorious to be at Edgbaston, of course, especially last Thursday morning. But one suspects that the full impact of that tumble of wickets was felt far from the ground as word spread to the workplaces of England via smuggled radios, Ceefax bulletins, dodgy premium phonelines or whatever.

The last comparable moment for the nation came in the early hours of May 2, the cry "Steve Waugh's gone!" perhaps being analogous to that of "Portillo's gone!" on election night. But, boring though it must be to keep trotting out the same cultural reference points, there has not been a moment like this for English cricket since the Brearley/Botham/Willis summer of 1981.

The win in the Jamaica Test of 1990 was an even bigger shock but its main effect was to enable Rupert Murdoch to start selling his wretched dishes to sports-lovers and pull back from the financial brink. . What really matters now is not whether England win or lose the Ashes but whether the effect will be to turn the next generation back on to cricket.

Initial signs are very hopeful, euphoric even, almost bordering on the hysterical here and there. Ladbroke has now made England 6–4 *on* to win the Ashes, with calmer bookmakers offering even money. One firm, Surrey Racing, yesterday chalked up 3–1 against Australia winning the series.

On the face of it, that is a fantastic bet. Cold, hard logic suggests that Australia, their captaincy crisis over, are likely to come back hard. They will have a fresh bowler, Paul Reiffel, proven in English conditions. The rest of the team should soon start finding their length and their snap, and they traditionally do well at Lord's.

But I couldn't place a bet like that. Could you? You would feel such a heel. Any winnings would have to go to Mike Brearley to pay for self-disgust therapy. No, we must have faith. And it is possible to put that faith on a rational basis.

THERE are strong suggestions that the Australian party are unhappy for reasons that transcend the mere loss of a cricket match. During their recent South African tour several senior players are said to have considered a pay strike in pursuit of a larger share of the money the Australian Cricket Board receives from television rights and merchandising.

The team are believed to be on a minimum of £50,000 a man for the three-month Ashes tour, much more for the top names. But one source in Australia has been talking of the situation resembling not 1981 but 1977, when cricket went into schism after Kerry Packer bought up the game's leading stars.

The players' union, the Australian Cricketers' Association, has a new national director, Graham Halbish, who until he was sacked last winter was the board's chief executive. Halbish is thus not merely a gamekeeper turned poacher, but a poacher with a grudge.

Situations of this sort, whether they turn into apocalypse or not, invariably eat away at a team's morale. And if the Australia players are looking to find grievances against their board, they only have to look back on the schedule inflicted on them over the past nine months.

In August 1996 the Australians were in Sri Lanka, mending fences after their failure to fulfil their World Cup fixtures there. In October they were obliged to play a pointless Test (which they lost) in India before going home to face a five-Test series against West Indies billed as a world heavyweight title showdown.

THEN they had to face three Tests away to South Africa, the most consistent team in the world, making a total of nine Tests and 24 one-day internationals (it would have been 30 had they not failed twice to reach the finals of three-way tournaments) before the three they played in England — and just two preparatory first-class matches before the Edgbaston Test.

As a lead-in to an Ashes series it was all clearly absurd. It looks like overconfidence bordering on contempt, rather like November marches on Moscow and springtime miners' strikes. England, in contrast, have had an unusually light year and a gradual build-up, which seems to be working out perfectly.

In reality, international cricket planning is too haphazard for this timetable to have been a comment on the perceived state of the English game. Faced with conflicting obligations Australia, with Halbish at the helm, took on too much. And they have started paying the penalty.

Today the current chief executives of the nine Test-playing countries begin their series of meetings that lead up to the full conference of the International Cricket Council early next week. An official World Championship is on the agenda. That would give a form and structure to the international game which is now very urgent indeed.

Just ask the Aussies.

Sport in brief

Athletics

Kelly Holmes's recovery from her Olympic disappointment in Atlanta continued last night when she won the 800 metres in 1min 58.65sec at the Bratislava Grand Prix meeting, *writes Duncan Mackay*.

The IAAF yesterday threatened to suspend any athlete who competes against Mary Slaney or Sandra Farmer-Patrick, banned for two years after positive drug tests.

Desmond Witbooi of South Africa has been given a four-year ban for anabolic steroid use; he was tested after finishing fifth in the Cape Town marathon in February.

Motor Sport

Carlos Sainz, the former world champion, came from behind on the penultimate stage to win the Acropolis Rally, finishing 17sec ahead of Finland's Juha Kankkunen, who had led for most of the three days, *writes David Williams*.

The Spaniard's Ford Escort WRC took the lead on the 19th of the 20 special dirt-road stages as the cars headed back to Athens. A cracked engine and resultant water leak cost Richard Burns his chance, with Mitsubishi eventually instructing the British driver to finish fourth behind the team's world championship leader Tommi Makinen.

Basketball

The Manchester Giants have signed the 6ft 6in England forward Delme Herriman, who played last season with Trieste in Serie A1. He becomes the sixth Mancunian on the Giants' senior roster, *writes Robert Pryce*.

Boxing

The champion Evander Holyfield's "Judgment Night 2" WBA world heavyweight showdown with Mike Tyson in Las Vegas on June 28 will be televised live on pay-per-view Sky Box Office.

Rugby Union

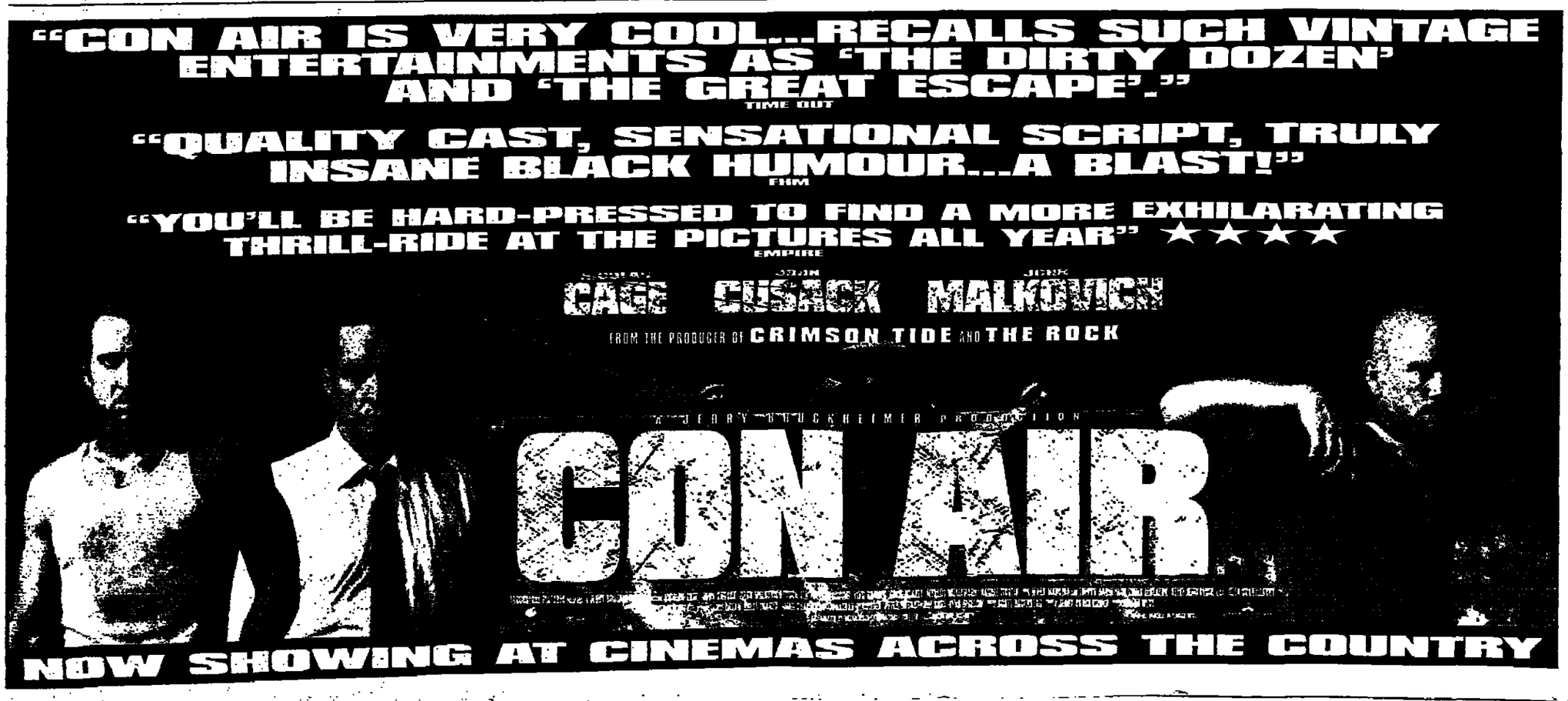
The Ireland Development XV were outscored four tries to one — Richard Governey's — in losing 41–10 to the New Zealand Maoris in Palmerston North.

Yorkshire give Gough a rest

YORKSHIRE decided to rest Darren Gough for the county match starting today at The Oval, after talks between the fast bowler, the club's — and England's — physio Wayne Morton, and the club's chief executive Chris Hassall.

The club said there had been no approach from the England team management to withdraw Gough, who has sore shins after his Edgbaston feats but denied that he had asked to be rested.

Somerset will decide today whether to rest Andy Caddick for their match against Hampshire.



A Yank at Royal Ascot, page 13

Graf to miss Wimbledon, page 14

Australia guns for Venables, page 14

Two through to Lord's, page 15

SportsGuardian

Tournoi de France

England 0, Brazil 1

England left to rue Romario

David Lacey in Paris

A GOAL from Romario, the first England have conceded away from home for more than 3½ years, puts Glenn Hoddle's useful but modest success in winning the Tournoi de France into a global perspective in the Parc des Princes here last night. It was enough to bring Brazil victory without ever needing to over-extend themselves.

Last night was England's passing-out parade, one last drill for the summer school of '97. Brazil, however, were merely passing through on their way to the South American Cup starting in Bolivia on Friday.

Just in case Brazil wanted to leave France with a flourish, Hoddle recalled Martin Keown to his defence, the Arsenal man's effectiveness as a close marker offering England more security against Ronaldo, at least in theory, than Gary Neville.

For Keown it was a dream come true, even if it might turn out to be one of the cold-sweat variety. But reality was to return after 21 minutes when he further injuring his already-damaged right shoulder, leaving his collarbone in need of an x-ray. So Gary Neville ended up playing after all.

As expected, Mario Zagallo fielded the Brazilian side that had finished the 3-3 draw with Italy two days earlier, Flavio Conceicao staying in midfield for the suspended Mauro Silva. England had plenty of early opportunities to study the opposition. For five minutes they saw a lot of Brazil but less of the ball.

Hoddle's defence conceded six corners in five minutes as Brazil's movements flowed through it and around it like liquid gold. Then a mistake by Gareth Southgate offered Ronaldo a clear glimpse of goal, but Sol Campbell rescued the situation with a well-timed tackle which he repeated on Leonardo a little late.

Paul Scholes, back in the England side after his impressive performance in the victory over Italy, re-announced his presence with a quick pass which released Alan Shearer on the right. Nothing came of the moment but it reminded Paris that the new champions still had an attack.

In fact, England were soon offering Brazil something more than gentle reminders. After 11 minutes Paul Gascoigne, making as sprightly a start as he had yet achieved under Hoddle, found Paul Ince with a smart back-heel and Taffarel had to move quickly to push Ince's 25-yard shot round the near post.

The moment released something in England's initially tentative approach. Scholes was linking well with Phil Neville, Gascoigne, Ince and Shearer and England's movements thrived in the generous spaces Brazil allowed them.

It was a pity that Denilson, the revelation against Italy, was forced off by injury soon after Keown's departure. The Brazilian had been hurt in an earlier tackle with Scholes. Not that the substitute, Djalminha looked out of place.

Just before the half-hour, he found Romario with a return pass that split the English defence, and only David Seaman's anticipation in coming out to block the shot prevented a goal.

After a busy start, Roberto Carlos had had a quiet first half on the Brazilian left. Just in case England had forgotten he was around, a free-kick struck with typical venom from a narrow angle on the left had Seaman punching the ball high over the bar.

Djalminha continued to impress, much as Denilson had done in Lyon. It was easy to spot which Brazilian was striving to win a regular place in the side.

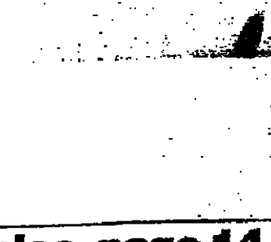
With Gary Neville showing tenacity in refusing to allow Leonardo to dribble round him, England still looked solid at the back. But Brazil still scored on the hour.

The initial fault lay with Gascoigne for not picking up Conceicao's advance over the halfway line. A pass to Leonardo, a ball inside Gary Neville, and Romario did the rest, outpacing the defence on the left before beating Seaman with a shot in off the far post.

ENGLAND: Seaman, Keown (both Arsenal); **Southgate** (Aston Villa), **Campbell** (Tottenham); **P Neville** (Manchester Utd), **Ince** (Internazionale), **Gascoigne** (Rangers), **Scholes** (Manchester Utd), **Le Saux** (Blackburn); **Shearer** (Newcastle), **Sheringham** (Tottenham).
BRAZIL: Taffarel (Atletico Mineiro); **Cafu** (Palmeiras), **Cello Silva** (Corinthians), **Aldair** (Roma), **Roberto Carlos** (Real Madrid); **Flavio Conceicao** (Deportivo La Coruna), **Dunga** (Jubilo Iwata), **Denilson** (Sao Paulo), **Leonardo** (Paris St-Germain); **Romario** (Flamengo), **Ronaldo** (Barcelona).
Referee: J J Toro Rendon (Col).

Playing in the Parc . . . Paul Gascoigne gets the ball past Flavio Conceicao, centre, as Paul Scholes, right, looks on PHOTOGRAPH: CHARLES PLATIAU

Hangovers from summer whines



Jim White

ONE of the things you forget over the winter is the humour value of Geoffrey Boycott on English cricket. This past week it has resurfaced for general consumption, unscathed by partial hibernation, cropping up everywhere as part of the great national sunbathe in the reflected glory of Atherton's world beaters.

Although his traditional I-told-you-so suffixes remain at the centre of his analyses ("Nasser Hussain's innings was majestic, I've rated him for years"), Boycott has added an observational tic: an enthusiasm for players' rear ends. "He's got a good strong physique on him, has Darren," he oozed over the weekend about England's Yorkshire quickie, "and a very good backside."

It was an unexpected pleasure the other day then to hear His Certainness utter reasoned common sense; doubly so since it occurred on Radio 5 Live's 6.06 phone-in, a show whose winter host keeps such a notion at arm's length. A listener rang to say that something should be done about summer football, about how it represented unfair competition for cricket. The man advised some protectionist measures: legislation to enforce the playing of the FA Cup final in April, the compulsory purchase of Sunday league shirts with every new Manchester United away kit, that kind of thing. Clearly a free-marketeer, Boycott was having none of it.

If cricket wants to win new followers, he said, it has to compete, show youngsters it is the finest game in the world, and the best way to do that is for the England team to win a few matches. "Then you'll see the bandwagon start rolling," he promised.

Yesterday at The Parks, Oxford University's cricket ground, there was little danger of being run over by an out-of-control bandwagon; expiring from agoraphobia more like, as four old men, a brace of summer snoggers and an infant, edgy in its buggy, made up the crowd.

I took along my sons in the hope that they might be inspired by the Aussie-slaying to put aside their obsession with kicking a ball, if only for the warmer months. These are boys hypnotised in the headlights of football's marketing juggernaut. Their current infatuation is Premiership marbles: little glass balls carrying pictures of Shearer, Wright and Fowler ("Only 365 to collect"). These are the consumers who need to be converted if cricket is to return to its pre-eminence.

It turned out that their first experience of a cricket match was not unlike being presented with a manuscript in Sanskrit: one short, lbw, the umpire putting on the bowler's floppy hat while the latter completed his over; everything required explanation.

This was not because the lads were too young to understand (after all, Nasser Hussain scored his first century at eight) but because they have no contact with the game in their daily lives. No role models, no foot-cricket in the playground, no County Championship sticker collections, nothing to seize on at all.

Moreover, if they actually want to play the game, primary schools having abrogated all responsibility for sport, they are obliged to join a club. And this is where the real competition comes in. Clubs — football, rugby, tennis — understandably want children to concentrate on *their* sport. It is not their job to introduce rival distractions. Indeed that would be counter-productive as they want junior members to concentrate on the task in hand.

Hence young sports enthusiasts are increasingly specialised; unless parents undertake to effect the introductions, the prospect of finding a new game by chance is diminishing; and cricket, for the uninitiated apparently the most esoteric option, is the one suffering most. Perhaps Boycott is right and only the glow of victory will open young eyes.

ODDLY enough, that is not the reason cricket has impressed my boys; nor is it the wrap-around shades, baseball caps, knuckle-knocking wicket celebrations nor any of the other livelier modernising trends in the game. It is the fielding. They love the slides, the dives, the tumbles, and when we go down to the park they do not want to bat or bowl but to chase the ball around with the enthusiasm of labrador puppies.

The other day, after a vigorous session in the park, I thought cricket had a future after all. "It's great," said one of the boys. "Brilliant warm-up for football training tonight."

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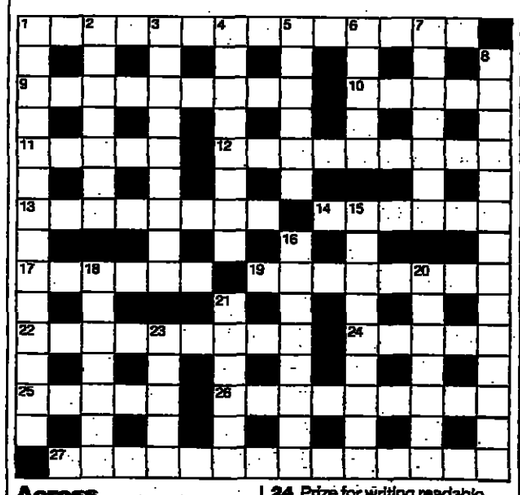
In all the countries represented, playwriting seems to have taken a similar turn recently. Everywhere — from former Communist countries to lifelong market economies — there has been a rejection of ideology.
Mark Ravenhill

G2 p10

Guardian Crossword No 20,987

Set by Auracaria



Across

1 Payment of gold changes performer: it's euphoria that counts (4-4,8)
9 Excerpt from Sir David on TV could cause digital problems (9)
10 The eyes that smile when their part's hard . . . (5)
11 . . . which in bed could be dangerous (5)
12 English eater takes in one French 6 (9)
13 Penniless Roman poet enters new Roman capital (8)
14 Doctor keeping moving finds tropical bird (6)
17 Coastal resort, part of Tyneside, to a T (6)
19 Ships heal over (4,4)
22 Shamefully killed, would have been strengthened with sex change (8)
24 Prize for writing readable verse (5)
25 Pole needs help to embrace a nymph (5)
26 The catwalk makes decent people angry (3,6)
27 Bear off objects at speed and the rest (9,5)

Down

1 I had two men with small feet to give the defendant his rights (5,9)
2 Feeling aroused by myself and to myself (7)
3 Request to fetch butter seems to annoy me (3,2,4)
4 I love variety, love being first pupil, and can cook (5,3)
5 Get away from the church — it's woolly (6)
6 Head of church I effectively manage (5)
7 Head keeping front page in view (7)
8 Apple pudding needs a lot of apple, sponge and cream (9,5)
15 Top coat for a prince as a babe? (5,4)
16 Austen's work, and it's found in back numbers (8)
18 Pigeon spreading disease? (7)
20 Home before six with new cat: Unbeaten is her name (7)
21 Altitude, top to bottom, is .125 (6)
23 Paper rubber? (5)

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